Tuesday, March 23, 2010 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 35 / No. 105 P18

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

DOING A CLOTTEY Filipino boxing hero Manny Pacquiao shows President Macapagal-Arroyo how to avoid getting hit during his Monday visit to Malacañang. Pacquiao, who retained his WBO welterweight crown after defeating Joshua Clottey of Ghana in Texas on March 13, said he would focus on his bid to win a seat in the House of Representatives in the May 10 elections. AP

FG tells foes: Be patient

Pacquiao back, mulls retirement from ring

By Christian V. Esguerra, Roy Luarca, Mike Morelos and Jeremy Aning

BARRING AN IRRESISTIBLE offer from the camp of Floyd Mayweather Jr., the boxing world may have seen the last of its best pound-for-pound fighter.

Manny Pacquiao dimmed the luster of his homecoming yesterday by saying that he was seriously thinking of hanging up his gloves.

"It's OK for me to retire. No problem with me ... I've been in boxing for so long. Since I was 12 years old, I have been fighting in the ring [and] now I'm already 31 years old," Pacquiao told in Filipino during a press briefing in Malacañang a few hours he arrived from the United States.

He said his mother, the popular Aling Dionisia, had been begging him to quit boxing.

PACQUIAO A-19

'Just few more months' before GMA steps down

By Christian V. Esguerra

MEET THE PRESS AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Delfin Bangit and PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa answer questions from the press during Monday's Army Day celebrations at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City. EDWIN BACASNG

BEAR WITH US FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS.

That was the message President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband yesterday gave to her detractors who had voiced concerns that his wife might hang on to power even after the elections in May.

"It's just a few months. All they have to do is wait," First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo told reporters during a courtesy call that boxing champion Manny Pacquiao made in Malacañang upon his return from a successful defense of his boxing crown in the United States.

Arroyo dismissed as "speculation" talk in opposition ranks about a possible failure of elections or what the President might do if she won in her bid for a congressional seat.

ARROYO: Looking forward to taking care of grandchildren

Mr Arroyo's political foes have warned that she might maneuver to win the speakership in the next Congress so she FG Thirk A4

'Emperor' walks out on media

By Jocelyn R. Uy

BAD NEWS IS GETTING ON the nerves of the "Emperor."

Gen. Delfin Bangit, newly appointed Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, walked out on a media interview yesterday when he was asked about reported tension between him and Director General Jesus Verzosa of the Philippine National Police.

A TV reporter told him it appeared that he and Verzosa were not talking during the ceremony marking the Philippine Army's 113th anniversary at Fort Bonifacio.

"That's what is hard, [if] you don't say anything, you are wrong, [and when] you say something, you are still wrong, so my PIO will take care of everything," said Bangit, who used the code-name "Emperor" when he was chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (Isafp).

Bangit, who was being interviewed after the celebration attended by President Macapa- EMPEROR A4

GMA snubs PNP chief anew at Army anniversary

By Christine O. Avendaño

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE Director General Jesus Verzosa sat among the country's top military brass but he could well have been invisible to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The President curiously did not acknowledge Verzosa's presence at the 113th founding anniversary of the Philippine Army in Fort Bonifacio yesterday while specifically mentioning the service commanders in the audience.

It was the second apparent snub on Verzosa.

On March 17, Ms Arroyo skipped the graduation ceremony of the PNP Academy on GMA SNUBS A4

LP urges movement to protect the ballot

By Vincent Cabreza, Leila B. Salaverria and Nikko Dizon

THE LIBERAL PARTY (LP) IS inviting rival parties to form a movement that would protect the ballot and allay fears the country's first automated election on May 10 has been designed to fail.

But the LP has not disowned this offer with Sen. Manuel Villar, standard-bearer of the Nacionalista Party (NP) and strongest rival of LP presidential candidate Benigno Aquino III, said Avelino Cruz Jr., who chairs the Bangay-Bulaca Movement. LP URGES A4

Pink is out; MMDA going 'Gibo' green

By Nita Calleja

"GREEN" AND BEAR IT. BF1 LOOKS LIKE Gibo's color is taking over your formerly "rosy" turf.

Not only is the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) repainting various road structures from pink to green, but it is also putting up signs trumpeting PINK A4

Enough time to elect new Senate head, says Enrile

By Christine Avendaño, Gil Cabacungan and Marlen Ranoa

OUTGOING SENATE PRESIdent Juan Ponce Enrile said he would ask the senators to elect a leader of the chamber who could act as interim president of the republic should the May automated elections fail.

Enrile, who is running for re-election, yesterday said he would initiate the move after the May 10 election because it would only be then that the country would know if the balloting had failed. ENDORSEN A4

Tempers fly in vice presidential debate

By Norman Bordadora

ANTI-CLIMAX VICE PRESIDENTIAL debate televised nationwide on Sunday night lived up to its billing as a confrontation.

After weeks of blasting each other in the media, leading vice presidential candidates Sen. Manuel Roxas II of the Liberal Party and Sen. Loren Legarda of the Nationalist People's Coalition finally traded barbs face to face.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay also received his acquittals with former Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando.

Broadcaster Jay Sonza of the Kilusan Bayong Lipunan and former Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Perfecto Yasay Jr. provided relief from the heated exchange, content with simply stating their positions.

The administration's Edu Manzano stayed away from the debate barely two months before the May 10 elections. TEMPERS A4

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Django** upstages Bata in Japan Open — SPORTS / A18
- **US Congress** passes historic health care bill — WORLD / A22
- **RP street** hooters finish with a flourish, beat S. Africa — SPORTS / A18
- **Sex ed must** be taught, says DepEd chief — NEWS / A4

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6/45 (March 20, 2010)
31 9 22 1 8 31

6D LOTTO
4 5 9 4 0 3

4PCSO 6/55
3 1 0 8 6 5 7

MEGA LOTTO 6/45
1 12 35 38 41 42
P9,322,687.00

Reverse CJ ruling, NP bets ask SC

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SIX SENATORIAL CANDIDATES OF THE Nacionalista Party (NP) yesterday asked the Supreme Court to reverse its "absurd" conclusion that the constitutional ban on presidential appointments during an election period did not apply to the judiciary.

The six NP candidates—lawyers Aiko Sumulong and Ezeta Pimentel, former Rep. Gilbert Remulla, party-list representatives Nanie Gozapan and Lisa Maria, and former Lt. Jnr. Undersecretary Jesus Ople—filed a motion for intervention and reconsideration of the high court's 9-5 decision that would allow President Macapagal-Arroyo to appoint a new Chief Justice a few weeks before she steps down from office.

Chief Justice Reynato Puno will retire on May 17, which falls within the election period that began two months before election day and will end with the outgoing president's term on June 30.

Section 13, Article VII, of the Constitution says appointments are prohibited during the election period save for "temporary appointments to executive positions when continued vacancies therein will prejudice public service or endanger public safety."

A related provision, Section 4, gives the promulgation 90 days to fill vacancies in the Supreme Court.

According to the candidates, the Supreme Court "failed to consider the clear intent of the framers of the Constitution and instead adopted a narrow interpretation of the two provisions resulting in an apparently absurd conclusion."

"Hence, it is not surprising that a lot of people, especially from the legal profession, consider the decision to have been tailor-fitted to suit the interests of incumbent President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who it widely suspected of planning to extend her term or at the very least to perpetuate herself in power," they said.

Defies common sense

They said that the high court erred in saying that the Constitutional ban does not apply to the Supreme Court because Article VII was titled "Executive Department."

This interpretation, they said, uses "too study an examination but defies the basic tenets of common sense."

Aside from being "overly simplistic," the interpretation "undermines the foundation of separation of powers," they said.

They said it was "obvious" that the provisions against "midnight" appointments were placed under Article VII "not to limit its coverage to the executive branch but to 'curb the president's insistence powers to appoint not only members of the executive department but also the judiciary, so it would not be abused to serve political or partisan interests."

"This is the reason why midnight appointments are not allowed. This provision was clearly meant to check the power of the president. To hold that the provision does not cover the judiciary effectively allows the incumbent president to undermine the independence of the judiciary at such a critical period," the NP senatorial candidates said.

They also argued that the constitutional provision giving the President 90 days to appoint members of the Supreme Court meant that the high court could survive as an institution without a permanent chief justice for a given period.

"There is no question and it is a verifiable fact that the functions of the Supreme Court which is a collegial body will not be affected by the absence of a permanent chief justice. If the Constitution recognizes the possibility of having an acting president, it necessarily finds no reason why there cannot be an acting chief justice," they said.

Protect from power lust

Lastly, they reminded the Supreme Court to "protect the people from the incumbent president's lust for power and other subsequent presidents who will have the same intention."

In a separate statement Ople, youngest daughter of former Sen. Blas Ople, said the Supreme Court in effect rewrote the Constitution.

Meanwhile, the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) will start the selection process for another nominee to fill the seat of the magistrate who will replace Puno.

"We have set yet started the (selection) process but given the Supreme Court decision, that process could start now," acting Justice Secretary Alberto Agra told reporters yesterday.

"There's no vacancy at the moment but we can start the nomination process," he added.

He said this would be included at its the agenda when the right man JBC meets on April 5.

Agra said they would also resume their discussion on the shortlist of nominees for Chief Justice.

He said they would decide whether they would still interview the candidates and how they would tackle the complaints filed against certain candidates.

He said the JBC would also ask associate Justices Antonio Carpio and Conchita Carpio-Morales to "clarify whether they are still willing to be nominated by the JBC." The two earlier said they would accept the nomination on the condition that it would be the next president who would make the final choice.

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Sex ed must be taught, says new DepEd head

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHILE THE DEPARTMENT OF Health (DOH) is distributing condoms, Education Secretary Mona Valisno is giving interviews, saying that sex education should be taught to schools so the students wouldn't "learn responsible family planning."

Sex education is an important aspect of family planning, Valisno said. It would deal with the country's "population explosion" and address the problem of students having unprotected premarital sex.

"We should educate our students... When you have sex education, you are opening their minds on how to do it the proper way," the new education secretary said.

Valisno's usefulness is to many extent to her predecessor, Jesli Lapus, the new trade secretary who had repeatedly denied the Department of Education (DepEd) was teaching about sex, opposed it to avoid incurring the wrath of the Catholic Church, a power in the country.

Lapus said the basic education curriculum only had a health subject that focused on personal hygiene and understanding the changes in an adolescent's body.

Valisno said sex education was important because "an amount of [government to others] from" would help the country's overcrowded public school system if the population growth rate remained high.

"We have so many babies born every minute," she said.

Valisno, who is also President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on education, said teaching students how to use condoms was important because some of them were already sexually active.

However, she drew the line on a proposal to distribute condoms to public schools.

"Responsible family planning or sex education is a very important aspect but if you put out a lot of condoms, that's another thing," she said.

She said sex education should be "handled very well," especially if taught to elementary school students.

"Whether it is in elementary or high school, that level of sex education [that would be taught] must be determined by experts. It should be at the level of the child's understanding," she said.

"There are psychologists, clinical psychologists. We have very good specialists in education," she added.

Earlier this month, the DepEd and the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) launched a program in 10 schools across the country aimed at preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.

The program, launched at Bagong Silangan High School in Quezon City, was designed to raise awareness among students of the importance of abstinence, making the right decisions, and the consequences of "sexual experiences either by choice or due to pressure from peer groups."

Susanna Tobin, Unicef country representative, wanted children and teachers at Bagong Silangan that "the Philippines is currently witnessing an increase of new HIV infections" among 15 to 24-year-old Filipinos, with the number of cases going up from 11 in 2007 to 113 in 2009.

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Poor seek halt to demolitions so they can vote

URBAN POOR GROUPS FROM VARIOUS parts of Metro Manila yesterday petitioned the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to ban the demolition of houses of informal settlers or squatters and their relocation during the election period so they would deprive them of the opportunity to vote.

They were joined by Urban Poor Associates, the Community Organizers Multiversity and Community Organization of the Philippine Enterprise Foundation.

The groups said demolitions often result in the relocation of informal settlers to far-flung areas.

Travel time and prohibitive fares would hinder them from returning to the cities where they are registered voters, they said.

In their petition, the groups said the evictions and demolitions could prevent up to 150,000 people from participating in the May elections.

"We believe the Comelec is vested with the authority to stop government agencies and officials from...implementing projects that will deprive us qualified voters from exercising our constitutional right to vote and participate in the coming elections," they said.

In a separate statement, the UPA said the number of disenfranchised urban poor voters could go as high as 800,000.

"Forced evictions and [relocation] of informal settlers to distant places in time of election [are] unlawful as they will surely disenfranchise thousands of the urban poor," UPA legal counsel Roosevelt Salinas said in a statement.

UPA member Nilo Enrico, in the same statement, said the government's rehabilitation of Ulu Mangahan Floodway in Pasig City could lead to the relocation of 20,000 voters to Laguna before May 10. —Leila B. Salaverria

DOJ: Raps to stay vs shipping execs

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS DEfined to withdraw the criminal charges it filed against an executive of Sulpicio Lines Co. and the missing captain of the M/V Princess of the Stars which sank off Sibuyan Island in Romblon, killing more than 800 passengers at the height of Typhoon "Frank" on June 21, 2008.

Acting Justice Secretary Alberto Agra yesterday said he denied the petition for review filed by Sulpicio vice president for external affairs Edgar Go-Bio, along with ship captain Florencio Maximon Jr., has been charged with reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide, serious physical injuries and damage to property before the Manila Regional Trial Court.

Out of 849 people believed on board the Cebu-bound vessel, only 32 survived. So far only 447 remains have been recovered after several salvage attempts.

The torpedo also damaged the marine habitat off Sibuyan Island since the ship was belatedly found to be transporting a large amount of the toxic pesticide endosulfan.

Maximon has been declared dead by the Philippine Coast Guard but his body has not been recovered.

Agra affirmed on March 22 a resolution issued on June 22, 2009 by a panel of DOJ prosecutors led by Senior State Prosecutor Emilia Vinuya finding "probable cause" to indict Go and Maximon.

He said he also affirmed the DOJ panel's recommendation in the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate officials and employees of the Philippine Ports Authority, Philippine Coast Guard and Bureau of Customs for their complicity in allowing the M/V Princess of the Stars to leave port at the height of the typhoon and to transport the banned pesticide.

With the denial of his petition for review, there is no more reason to delay Go's arraignment, Agra said. —Jaime E. Pantilingan

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Tempers fly in vice presidential debate

From page A1

The most spectacular flare when an incensed Binay told off Fernando after the MMDA chief brought up Makati's dirty waterways that his agency had supposedly cleaned up.

"Mine, we're the ones that worked on that, Binay. We spent our own money there," Binay said, visibly trying to restrain his ire.

"I pity you. You're unwise of my city's wealth. But we are using our city's funds for its welfare," he added.

Fernando skimmed Binay when the mayor asked him if he would support an investigation of President Macapagal Arroyo's alleged wrongdoing.

"You're yet to do that?" Fernando said. "That has already taken too long. You are a lawyer. You've closed ranting in for the President. Why have you not come up with anything so far?"

She didn't pull punches

Legarda-Lim didn't pull her punches.

She told a teacher presented by the broadcast network that she was sorry that her bill increasing the salaries of public school teachers had not been passed.

"I'm not the chair of the committee on education. It's Mar Roxas. I think not one hearing was ever conducted on the measure," Legarda said.

Roxas' choicest words could have been his nod at Legarda's decision to consider Estrada guilty to acquittal.

"Those who don't follow the party rules ... have no self-discipline," Roxas said.

"I didn't cry in the Senate when the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada in January 2001 was aborted," he added.

Fernando's allies in the Senate at that time voted to suppress evidence and prosecution walked out.

Legarda, then a Lakas stalwart and ally of then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, later ran for vice president of Estrada's last friend, Fernando Poe Jr.

Propose pretenders

Binay, the third placer in the poll surveys, in his opening statement referred to Senate as among those "who pretend to be progressive" but voted for the passage in Congress of the Expanded Value-Added Tax (e-VAT) Law in 2005.

"This has caused the suffering of many of our people," Binay said.

In the contest between survey leaders, Legarda drew first blood when she confronted Roxas with his vote to approve the highly unpopular e-VAT and his "reinvestment" version of the Cheaper Medicines Law.

She also questioned his family's control and hold on 1,400 hectares of land in Hacienda Luisita despite the agrarian reform law.

LIP CLOSE AND PERSONAL. VP-NPC-LDP vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda shakes hands with LP rival Mar Roxas just before they traded barbs in "Harapan," ABS-CBN's televised presidential debate held on the La Consolacion College grounds in Manila on Sunday night. Behind are vice presidential contenders Jejo Binay and Bayani Fernando who have no love-lost for each other.

"My family and I have heard those questions and sometimes we just laugh at them," Roxas said, adding the dispute is moot.

Nothing wrong

Roxas showed no regret for his vote for the e-VAT that was widely viewed as the culprit behind the defeat in 2007 of its sponsor, former Sen. Ralph Recto, who's since again running for reelection.

"There's nothing wrong with taxation. What's wrong is when taxes are violent," Roxas said.

He defended the provision of the affordable medicines measure giving the President the responsibility of lowering rents rather than to a board that would set prices. He said a board would only become another source of corruption.

"The Legarda [law] you are talking used to cost P30B. Now it only costs P5B," Roxas told Legarda.

Climate change

Roxas questioned Legarda's priorities in making the environment her advocacy noting that the Philippines accounts for less than 1 percent of the climate problem.

"It is a pet issue," Legarda said. The Philippines is one of the 10 countries that would be most affected by climate change, she said.

The El Niño-caused drought that destroyed crops around the country that killed many people during the months of Storms "Ondoy" and "Peping," Legarda said, showed that climate change was an issue that directly affected the people.

Sen. Richard Gordon, who showed up at the event to support Bayani, his running mate, expressed disappointment at the debate, criticizing the behavior of the rowdy brought along by the candidates and calling the event "a mob rule."

"There's a lot of pandering ... so much noise rather than reflection." With reports from Michael Lim Ubac

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 23, 2010
5th Week of Lent

Lectionary:	Num 21:4-9
Gospel:	Jn 8:21-30

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I am going away, and though you look for me, you will die in your sin. Where I am going you cannot come." The Jews wondered, "Why does he say, 'Where I am going you cannot come' where he is going? Will he kill himself?"

He then said, "You are from below and I am from above; you are of this world and I am not of this world. That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. And you shall die in your sins unless you believe that I am He."

They asked him, "Who are you?", and to this end, "And what I have told you from the beginning. What much to say about you and much to condemn; but the One who sent me is truthful and everything I learned from him, I proclaim to the world." They didn't understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing of myself, but I say just what the Father taught me. He who sent me is with me and has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him." As Jesus spoke like this, many believed in him.

Commentary

"He who sent me is with me, he has not left me alone..."

In that time sacrifices in the desert places of life, to find helpless in the place of what changes, or to receive frightening, lonely experience.

Have a nice cloud day.

The Lord who made us is in us and with us always.

Who is called to serve can be tried to find.

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Enough time to elect new Senate president

From page A1

He was reacting to a proposal made by Sen. Edgardo Angara for till 23 senators to elect a new Senate president before May 16 because of the possibility of a power vacuum in which no newly elected president is proclaimed by June 30 as a result of a failure of elections.

The Senate president is the second in the line of succession after the Vice President.

Without a new Senate president, the line of succession would be broken because the terms of office of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Vice President Noli de Castro, Enrile and Speaker Prospero Nograles will end on June 30, according to Angara.

"The civilian authority should move now because the military as the people's protector, may take over the government to avert violence attacking from a power vacuum," according to Angara.

Possible military takeover

Last week, Charito Planas, the President's deputy spokesperson, said that a military takeover was possible in case of a failure of elections.

Even the Philippine Station of Police is not discounting the possibility of a military takeover if the elections failed to produce a new president.

"We always consider all things possible," PNP Director General Jesse Versoza said in reply to questions from reporters in Camp Crame yesterday.

'Just a normal process'

But Versoza quickly added that there was no indication that the military might be planning to spoil the elections to pave the way for Ms. Arroyo to stay in Malacañang palace.

He said preparing for the worst-case scenario was "just a normal process for all police agencies and military institutions around the world."

"We always prepare for any eventuality. We consider all things from the (most possible) to the strangest possibility," he added.

Versoza reiterated that the 120,000-strong PNP was ready to safeguard the sanctity of the republic. "We are your protectors," he said.

Enrile said on DZBB radio that he did not believe the elections would fail as feared by some quarters.

Still, he said even if it happened, the nation would only know for sure after the polls or by May 11. "And we have some 50 days up to June 30 to solve the problem," he said.

"If there is a failure of elections, I myself will call a meeting by senators to choose a new former president to exercise a second's transition of power through the succession process prescribed by the Constitution," Enrile said.

ENRILE

Civilian gov't in place

Enrile said the possibility of the military taking over the country should the elections fail "will never happen."

"There is always a civilian in the government," he said.

Enrile pointed out that the Department of National Defense, Department of Interior and Local Government, and National Police Commission would still be around.

"They will be the one to defend the country and the commander in Chief and the executive will be the one to lead the country," he added.

Enrile's statement was a turnaround from the warning he made last year that the military and police would take over the country to preserve the peace in the aftermath of a failed election.

Enough time

Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III said there was enough time to elect a new Senate president with a term up to 2013 to appoint a smooth transition of power in case of a failure of elections.

Aquino, the Liberal Party standard bearer, said Congress could convene on May 31 and the Senate could choose a senator who has three more years in his or her term to replace Enrile.

With half of Senate members serving until 2013, the chamber is considered a "continuing body," he said.

"But their concern should be to ensure that the May 10 elections are fair and transparent and that the results are known immediately. There is no need to worry about a succession problem if the elections are credible and truly reflect the will of the people," Aquino said.

Low pressure area could be first storm

WEATHERMEN ARE WATCHing a low pressure area off eastern Mindanao which could develop into a storm.

If it does, it will be the first storm of the year.

Nathaniel Cruz, deputy administrator for administration and operation of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), said the low pressure area was expected to enter the Philippine area of responsibility on Wednesday.

There is a possibility the incoming low pressure area will develop into a storm or typhoon, he said.

If it does strengthen into a tropical cyclone, it will be called "Agaton," Cruz said.

In its latest weather forecast, Pagasa said Mindanao and eastern Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms.

Cruz said this was not yet an effect of the new weather disturbance.

The rest of the country will experience partly cloudy and cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms. *Katharine Evangelista, Inquirer.net*

FG tells foes: Be patient, only a few more months

From page A1

could be in line for the post of prime minister, assuming the Constitution is changed and the Philippines switches to a parliamentary form of government.

Opposition fears about Mr. Aquino's administration once heightened when deputy presidential spokesperson Charito Planas herself recently said that a failure of elections might pave the way for a military junta to take over power in the country.

However, said he and his wife were looking forward to "taking care of our grandchildren", even if Mr. Aquino won a congressional seat in Pampanga.

"Being in congresswoman is easier than [being a] President. No duties are here," he said.

Concerning on the talk that Mr. Aquino was eyeing the premiership post and the position of prime minister, the Presidency's husband said: "That's up to the congressman, whether they'll elect him as speaker or not."

Why be scared?

Press Secretary Ricardo Saludo then made it clear that Mr. Aquino was "listening over the government to ... whoever is going to be elected."

"It's only a little over two months and the President has not done anything to indicate [that she would stay on]," Abad said in separate briefing.

Gen. Oliver, deputy presidential spokesperson, trivialized the political opposition for speculating "about so many things."

"There's no need for them to be scared of the President," he said in a media briefing.

"She's stepping down. She will be a congresswoman from Pampanga," Oliver said.

He added: "So I'm wondering where that fear is coming from."

Statistically impossible

The Palace yesterday criticized scenarios intended to show that a failure of election would be a "statistical impossibility." Oliver said such a failure would require a "confluence of events so unique that it defies any reasonable odds."

"We are talking about all the counting machines going bust at the same time, all the multiple sources of power cutting out at the same time ... all the transmission lines going down at the same time and isolating all the precinct automobile from Comelec (Commission on Elections) headquarters," he said in a media briefing.

"Why do I say 'all'? Because if any number of yous—no matter how small... get to be counted and canvassed by our trusted and true manual methods, then still always be [chair—no matter] how small... for the Comelec and the Presidential Electoral Tribunal to declare election recast," Oliver said.

He added: "And if the alternative to such a declaration—to manual—is not naturally basic—is inadequate, unsafe and the risk of instability when the would a responsible election official do but proclaim someone as the new leadership?"

No power vacuum

Oliver said the legislative branch would not be "powerless" in the event of a power vacuum.

"In the just one scenario, the holdover members of the [ex-officio—assuming nobody gets elected] assuming the [senatorial candidates] as well—could simply elect a new Senate president from among themselves between election day and June 30," he said.

"That person could then step up on No. 3 in the presidential line of succession."

Speaking at the 111th founding anniversary of the Philippine Army in Fort Bonifacio, Mr. Aquino vowed to keep out of it undertakings by the May 13 elections and to focus his energies on governing the country in the last remaining months of his nine-year administration.

He also took the opportunity to thank the Army for supporting his administration in both the "lean" and "worst" times.

Pay increases

With only three months to go before the reign down, Mr. Aquino told the soldiers the time working on them getting their pay increases before June 30, when he's term ends.

Talking of the role of the military in the May elections, Mr. Aquino said: "We all know it is the Comelec's job to ensure the honesty, truthfulness ... words, the votes are protected and counted, and the results are delivered in a manner to the satisfaction of voters. You are deputized by Comelec but be rapped, I will be keeping out of that process."

He said the world "remains focused on governance and advancing the key programs that are advocated."

She said her administration would turn over to the next administration "rock solid" achievements, including an "unprecedented" 36 quarters of consecutive growth and 1.7 million jobs in the past year despite the global economic crisis.

She reiterated that her administration was "devoted" to ensure a smooth transition to a new government. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

'Emperor' walks out on media

From page A1

pal-Arroyo, then abruptly walked away to a waiting car.

In a recent interview with business columnist and reporter Ricardo Saludo said he would not support Bangit should he attempt to keep Mr. Arroyo in office in the event of a failure of the May 10 elections.

But Bangit and Brosona sought to dispel such speculation on Friday when the AFP chief of staff went to Camp Crame to discuss with the PNP chief security matters related to the elections.

Bangit, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1978 which adopted Mr. Aquino as an honorary member, was ejected of Alumni at the PMA.

Later at Camp Aguinaldo, Bangit expressed displeasure over the media for what he said were attempts to sow discordance in the military for "base" purposes.

"What is coming out to the news is not good anymore. One people are hunting something that should not be found," he told reporters after meeting with officials of the PMA Alumni Association Inc.

"I feel that you are smiling when there is a misunderstanding among our soldiers," Bangit said. "I hope you stop this because there is no truth to what is being said to the newspapers, radio and the television."

Critics' imagination

Bangit was the Mr. Aquino's senior aide-de-camp when she was the Vice President and was chief of the Presidential Security Group during three coup attempts against him in one widely-publicized event, Bangit stormed pose hills during a Christmas party when he was chief of staff.

Generals belonging to the 1988 class of 1977 and 1978 accepting key positions in the AFP dismissed speculation of a military takeover should a power vacuum ensue.

Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, Eastern Mindanao commander, told reporters that he was certain of a transfer of power by June 30 and that the possibility of a military junta was a mere "imagination" by government critics. "I believe that," he said.

Loyal to Constitution

Ferrer has said no one was applauding the recent appointment of Lt. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu as Philippine Army chief but that he was not questioning the promotion.

Last week, Malacañang spokesperson Charito Planas raised the possibility of a military junta if Abaver would be no president, vice president, Senate president or House Speaker as interim power in June 30 if the end of the May elections.

"We don't like that," said Maj. Gen. Jaime Sabban, Marine commandant. "The military will follow orders as whatever comes! But are circulating, they have no interest in rumors and speculations."

When asked if he shared Ferrer's sentiment, Sabban replied, "All of us will not follow illegal orders."

He said he supported calls of the PMA alumni association on its members both active and retired to help ensure the integrity of the elections.

"Let us not rule with dem," Sabban said. "It means everybody, even our people, that nothing will happen and we will be down to see to it that everything is legal and that the Constitution will be followed."

Mapagu said there was no division among officers of a government takeover. "There is no scenario of that kind in the horizon and we are not discussing it because it is not going to happen."

ARMY DAY President Macapagal-Arroyo crosses the line with Army chief Lt. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu during the Army Day celebrations at Fort Bonifacio.

BATTLE READY Army soldiers march during the 111th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Philippine Army at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City.

GMA snubs PNP chief anew at Army anniversary

From page A1

event she made a point to attend to the end.

This was either Brosona seen to be the hostess affair and said that he would not support Gen. Emilio Bangit, newly appointed chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, should he attempt to keep Mr. Arroyo in office if the May 10 elections failed.

Also absent in yesterday's affair was interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

Assistant Secretary Brian Sumaran told Peter, who is close to Brosona, had been on leave since last week for a medical checkup in preparation for the start of the local election campaign on Friday.

Puno is the chief campaign manager of the administration's presidential candidate, Interior Secretary Manuel Roxas II.

Sumaran denied talk that Puno was asked to go on leave in connection with the controversy over Mercosur's ammunition.

Puno took off on March 17, the same day Mr. Arroyo skipped the PNP graduation ceremony.

Mr. Arroyo profusely thanked the military for supporting her administration the past nine years, professing her sympathy with an acknowledgement of the presence of Bangit, Vice Adm. Emilio Marquez and Army Chief Lt. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu.

The President was well aware that Mr. Arroyo was present in the crowd. So, less than 30 pages had acknowledged the presence of the PNP chief.

Incident downplayed

Palace officials downplayed the incident.

"There is nothing to be inferred from the incident that there is to the level of something that we should be worried about as citizens," said Gary Olivar, deputy presidential spokesperson. "It may make for interesting gossip but that's all it is."

Olivar told reporters that "personal issues may exist" between the President and Brosona or even anyone else but he stressed what was important was that "we have functional institutions, functioning processes."

"The important thing is the chain of command is intact and obedience to the laws by the uniformed men is also intact," Olivar said.

He said Brosona continued to be PNP chief. "There is still a functioning and good relationship between Ferrera and the Commander in Chief."

Asked whether this meant Brosona still enjoyed the trust of the President, Olivar said: "I have no reason to believe otherwise after the facts I have just described."

Pink is out; MMDA going 'Gibo' green

From page B1

its new choice of color.

Tunguhan pinned with slogans like "Green is Cool," "Green to Go," Green is Hope," and "Green is Clean" would be mounted this week along major thoroughfares, especially along Edsa, to formally launch the agency's "Go Green Metro" program, MMDA Chair Oscar Inocencio said yesterday.

Green symbolizes environmental growth," Inocencio said in a statement. "We would like the world to know that through the MMDA, Metro Manila is doing its share to conserve and protect our Earth, our environment."

He sought the cooperation of the 17 Metro Manila mayors in promoting the agency's "green ideology."

The agency had initiated a metro-wide paint job on the pink street signs, foot bridges, sidewalk curbs and lane barriers installed during the term of then MMDA Chair Bayani "By" Fernando, now an opposition vice presidential candidate.

Fernando's pink motif—sometimes with a touch of lilac—also extended to the facade of some private homes that line major roads and to the MMDA building itself on Edsa in Makati City.

No political brushstroke

In an interview last December, but shortly after he took over, Inocencio justified the color change, saying it "Filipinizes" Green is easier on the eyes, while pink is a color associated with pain."

The MMDA chair denied speculations that the change was a political brushstroke in support of Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro, standard-bearer of the administration party Lakas-Kampi-CMD, whose campaign color also happened to be green.

He insisted that the mindset was just "coincidence."

A member of the ruling par-

ty, Inocencio earlier served as presidential assistant for political and judicial affairs with the rank of undersecretary under the Office of the President.

4,800 Ficus trees

In the statement yesterday, the MMDA chief said the agency would also plant at least 4,000 Ficus trees on the center islands of primary and secondary roads all over the metropolis.

Ironically, the MMDA under Fernando considered trees planted on center islands and sidewalks as traffic hazards that obscure the view of motorists or hamper the movement of pedestrians.

Trees that become casualty of road-clearing and widening projects at the time.

Though his view had its exponents of supporters, Fernando's tree-cutting operations drew the ire of affected residents, environmental groups, and some lawmakers.

LP urges movement to protect the ballot

From page A1

Cruz, a former defense secretary and an Aquino supporter, said on Sunday that the Catholic Church, which has formed a movement to monitor the elections, would likely discuss the campaign with Villar.

Erap was in Baguio City on Sunday with Florencio Abad Jr., LP campaign manager, to organize party members into a local Erap-Bakosi chapter.

In Lucena City, Villar said his party would do everything that it could to ensure attempts to sabotage the elections.

"We've mustered to train watchers and lawyers as well as colleagues in the automated elections. We are doing everything that we could to stop any attempt to disrupt the elections," Villar told reporters on Sunday on the sidelines of the MP's first senatorial rally.

Work together

Villar also urged other political parties and organizations to do the same and expressed hope that all would work together to have clean and honest elections.

Villar reiterated his call for the public to remain vigilant amid fears that the automated elections would fail.

Certain quarters have warned that a failure of elections in which no winner in the presidential election is proclaimed by June 30, the last day of President Macapagal-Arroyo in office, could lead to a military takeover.

They said glitches in the automated counting machines and possible massive power outages, among other things, could delay the release of election results.

Summons prophets of doom

Its election lawyer, however, has suggested that the Commission on Elections (Comelec) summon and challenge the "prophets of doom," who speak ill of the automated polls.

Bernabe Macalintal, Mr Arroyo's election lawyer, said that if the naysayers failed to support their claims, the Comelec could file charges against them.

Macalintal is one of three election lawyers who will appear in a TV commercial in which they will proclaim their support for the automated elections to help boost the public's confidence in the exercise. The others are Gino Dallanon and George Garcia.

"We believe that we should give assurance a chance," Macalintal told reporters.

The Comelec has intensified its campaign to educate voters about the new system, conducting demonstrations on how the ballot machine works ever, in far-flung communities.

Voters will be using for the first time a machine called the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) (ess-sikoh-symbol) ballots are filed and scanned. Results are expected within 2 hours at the local level and 36 hours at the national level.

Subpoena naysayers

Macalintal also urged the Comelec to subpoena (naysayers) and ask them to back up their statements.

If there is evidence, the Comelec can still lay down additional measures to address the causes of a possible failure of elections. But if there is none, the Comelec should site these people in contempt or file election cases against them, Macalintal added.

The Namfrel Election Code provides those who make false information that could affect the elections, be punished out.

Election Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal said the poll body on June 5and set to discuss Macalintal's proposal, but he welcomed the idea.

Glitches, bugs

In Dagupan City, a senatorial candidate of the Partido ng Manang Pilipino said automation could encounter glitches and elections could fail.

Jose de Venecia III, the man who blew the whistle on alleged anomalies in a government broadband contract with a Chinese firm, said even a simple program for a bank took him a year to perfect.

"The same thing would happen [in the program for the voting machines]. There will be bugs," De Venecia, son of Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr., told reporters yesterday.

Open source code

The young De Venecia said there was a need to know the source code of the program that runs the election machines. The code is the heart of the software that gives instructions in the computer.

"We hope the election program is tested first...for example, in Ilocos Manila. If there are problems, these could be remedied immediately," he said.

While De Venecia said he was one of the few people who understood the repercussions of using an untested computer program, he joined the senatorial race "on a leap of faith."

"This is because it is easy to cheat in automated elections, according to Dr Watson.

Meanwhile, the LP head added that Comelec is "full of its obligation to open up the source code of the PCOS machines for inspection by political parties.

When the Comelec released, the LP could not access every detail about the source code given the tight restrictions which the poll body enforced, Cruz said.

Give automation a chance

Amid the apprehensions, a Catholic bishop in Southern Mindanao has urged voters give automated elections a chance, saying a fair and smooth election "has been a long-time dream of Filipinos."

"For a long time, we have been hoping for a free election where we could fight many detriments for will of the people," bishop Wilfredo Manlapaz of the Tagum diocese told a congregation of over a thousand during the signing of a peace covenant by local candidates at Christ the King Cathedral here on March 21.

Manlapaz said automation "could [run, difficult to the looking of] a violence-free, clean and credible election."

Lawyer Marlon Casquejo, assistant Davao regional elections chief, said the Comelec was on track in its education and information campaign.

"Even the education campaigns at the Gabi Gang ilang'ay Kitakitang Kasilinghan ni Boto Kabisdat Commission] are very much welcome," Casquejo said, adding the commission is "now 99 percent ready."

With a report from Yolanda Jobito Izaguirre Aurthers Lasco

Pacquiao back, mulls retirement from ring

From page A1

media to spare his body from further punishment.

"My camp told me that the would have better use if the fans in, if only to convince me to stay away from boxing," the Filipino megastar said. "Of course, we should respect our parents because without them, we are nothing."

Door ear closed

Bing reporters said a fight with Mayweather, an undefeated American, could earn Pacquiao a guaranteed purse of $25 million, not including his share in pay-per-view revenues and gate receipts.

For beating the Ghanaian Ashton Chother in Texas on March 13, Pacquiao earned at least $4.2 million.

But while saying that a win should defer to the wishes of his mother, Pacquiao in the same breath indicated he was not closing the door to a megafight with Mayweather or Shane Mosley.

He said that while he was not obliged to fight Mayweather, "I am open to him fighting me (so that he can do it)."

"You still fight," he said.

Pressed further on a fight with Mayweather, Pacquiao said, "Maybe it wasn't meant to be. Maybe I'll announce my retirement."

Mayweather or Mosley

Mayweather was supposed to have fought Pacquiao in Texas but negotiations fell apart due to the American's demand for an Olympic-style (random) drug-testing.

Mayweather wanted blood tests up to 14 days before the fight. Pacquiao would not agree to testing within 24 days of the fight, saying it would make him weak.

Pacquiao instead signed on to fight Oscar Mayweather de-

HEARTY MEETS HEARTY Boxing great Manny Pacquiao is welcomed at the airport by HP presidential candidate Manny Villar. With them are (from left) the latter's daughter Princess, wife Jinkee, and sons Justod and Michael. ROSSR. CAPUNITAN

VICTORIOUS Boxing icon Manny Pacquiao waves to cheering crowds during Monday's motorcade in Manila. RAY ALMENDRAS

cided to take on Mosley on Lenten Sunday.

"We should win against Mosley. If not, Mosley and I will fight," said Pacquiao, who believes he does not need to fight Mayweather to cement his place in boxing history.

Pacquiao's statements that he might retire from boxing were shadowed the senate welcome he received from rounds of ardent Filipino who stayed at him as he rode in a motorcade through Manila.

(1)-kilo cake

Looking dapper in a gray suit over a light blue long-sleeved polo and dark tie, Pacquiao made a cameo call on President Macapagal-Arroyo at 10:20 a.m., 40minutes after the Philippine Airlines plane that flew him from Los Angeles landed at the airport.

Pacquiao was accompanied on the flight home by his wife, Jinkee. They were met at the airport by their children Michael, Jornel and Princess.

Among those who lined up at the Senate reception hall to welcome Pacquiao and his party was the son of Comelec-bet Rep. Dato Arroyo, 5th district, youngster son.

"I am (Arthur) Chother!" the boy excitedly said, voicing his fan status — Chother's defensive prowess. Pacquiao responded with a bit of playful taunting with the boy on his way to the senate room, where he met with Ms Arroyo and her husband.

As had been the ritual after every Pacquiao victory, the senate treated with a cake by Pilmico chefs. This time, it was three-layered chocolate cake with replicas of a pair of boxing gloves and his championship belt.

"This is just (2) kilos. Good thing I'm still slim-ng," Pacquiao told cameramen while sampling the cake, drawing laughter.

The morning with Ms Arroyo came months after Pacquiao joined Nacionalista Party presidential candidate Jose Manuel Villar. He said his decision did not affect his ties with the Perezdeos.

"There's no problem. In fact, she has always supported me in my fights," he said.

Mass in Quiapo

Pacquiao also refused to the possibility that he might split boxing when he talked with other reporters at Sofitel Hotel in Makati City, where he rested briefly upon his arrival.

Among those who welcomed him was Villar, whose hand Pacquiao raised after they arrived at the hotel.

The other welcomers included Deputy National Security Adviser Lito "Cheril" Singson and former environment secretary Lito Atienza, who is running for Manila mayor in the May elections.

Villar asked people to respect Pacquiao's decision to consider a different career path when he retires, referring to Pacquiao's decision to run for the congressional seat of Sarangani province in May.

"My hope is to think about his life after boxing and I think he chose to be elected," said Villar, who came in his signature orange shirt.

Later in the morning, Pacquiao heard Mass at the packed Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene, or the Quiapo Church.

Family decision

Speaking toward the end of the service, Pacquiao referred to the May elections and said: "We have our own decisions in life ... We all have different beliefs on who we want to be our leaders in the elections."

He added: "I hope you do not associate boxing with politics. Boxing gives us honor, it is not connected with politics."

At one point, he said in Filipino: "Manny Pacquiao will not be a boxer for whole life. I will only be boxing for a short time. I have been in that career for a long time."

"This is something that the entire family has to make about and seriously discuss," he added.

Mesdeldon cheered. Our champion during the two-hour motorcade amble a seven-hour feat. Pacquiao stood on the cargo hold of an FF truck, which blared songs associated with him.

Stubble in the procession was a mobile billboard of Manny and his running mate, Bongbong Marcos.

In the streets, men thumped their chests with their fists to show their feeling of pride while women screamed, "Pacquiao, I love you."

The biggest tycoon was in Tondo, where residents rushed out of their houses to greet their idol. **With reports from Jeannette I. Andrade, AFP and AP**

Perlas best bet to solve water woes, survey shows

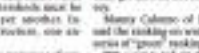
By Ms. Cleni B Dayo

THE WATER PROBLEM MUST BE ADdressed holistically, said one presidential candidate. Another said clean water was a human right. Watersheds must be safeguarded, stressed yet another. Invest in plywood infrastructure, one answered.

These were some of the responses of seven presidential aspirants to questions posed by environmental groups in a "Green Electoral Initiative" (GEI) survey, particularly on the issue of water.

To mark World Water Day yesterday, EcoWaste Coalition and Greenpeace announced their ranking of the presidential candidates' platforms on clean water. They were graded from zero to 10, with 10 as the "greenest."

To demonstrate the survey results, activists



unfurled nine empty pails of water, each representing the candidates' scores. They opened "pipe-laced" style as if as a water pump, at the activity held at Quezon City Hall.

The grading on the water issue was part of a bigger rating scheme for the candidates' environmental platforms, the complete results of which will be released in April.

Environmentalist Nicky Perlas received the "greenest" mark with 8.7 points, while independent candidate Sen. Loadry Madrigal came in second with 7.6 points. Bagumbayan standard-bearer Sen. Richard Gordon was third with 7.2 points.

They were given the highest marks for their "clear, comprehensive and progressive positions and plans in protecting the country's water resources."

Bangon Pilipinas' Sen. Eddie Villanueva scored 4.8 points; Liberal Party's Sen. Benigno Aquino III and Nacionalista Party's Sen. Manuel Villar each got 3.6 points; and Ang Kapatiran candidate JC de los Reyes got 2.7 points.

Women Presidenti Joseph Estrada of Nacionalista Party and ex-Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro of Lakas-Kampi-CMD got zero for not responding to the survey.

Manny Calonzo of EcoWaste Coalition said the ranking on water was the first of a series of "green" rankings to be released.

"We want to inform the voters how those aspiring to lead our nation intend to tackle environmental issues such as the declining quality and quantity of our freshwater sources caused by continued generation and discharge of pollutants from household, agricultural and industrial sources," he said.

Greenpeace and EcoWaste Coalition, a network of more than 20 environmental groups, stressed the need to put in place "a robust policy and program that aims to zero discharge to reduce [the] pollution on the country's freshwater and groundwater sources as well as to avoid loosing chemical threats to our remaining water supply."

They also wanted the public's "right to know" about pollution reduction.

On the issue of water, the candidates were asked two questions: (1) if elected president, what specific steps will you take to ensure the availability of clean water sources in the country? and (2) for you for or against amending the Clean Water Act to incorporate and institutionalize a framework of zero-discharge of hazardous chemicals from factories and domestic sources?

for Perlas: "Water must be addressed holistically. We need to implement the framework of comprehensive watershed management and this should be done within a comprehensive land use plan which delineates the watersheds around the country-ones and for all.

Madrigal said: "Clean water is a human right. As president and concerned secretary of the environment, I shall remedy the continuous decline in the quality of our clean water sources. I shall have the DENR issue a system that goes beyond standards and focuses on prevention.

Gordon replied: "First, safeguard our watersheds with reforestation programs that involve endemic species. Second, demand implementation by every local government of the rainwater collection law. Third, develop a system of install claims throughout the country. Fourth, develop a system of incentives for individuals to incorporate rainwater storage systems and filtration in their homes."

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Farmers, fishers ask bets: What about us?

By Rizz T. Dizlando's

WHAT MIGHT AGRICULTURE and fishing?

An alliance of farmer and fisherfolk groups has asked the presidential candidates to monitor the Department of Agriculture (DA) budget and to place more emphasis on agriculture in their respective agendas.

Alyansa Agrikultura, in a letter to each candidate, said the DA budget had tripled from P10.8 billion in 2005 to P48.5 billion in 2009 but the National Agricultural and Fisheries Council, which should be watching over the budget, had not met recently.

The alliance said not holding meetings prevented stakeholders from monitoring the funds.

The alliance said there should be a master plan for each subsector of agriculture, with participation from small farmers and fisherfolk.

The group also said massive rice importation could be avoided if the government concentrated on repairing existing irrigation systems rather than building new ones.

"Repairs cost P60,000 per hectare while new structures cost P300,000, when both yield the same benefit at one additional harvest per year," said Ernesto Ordoñez, chairman Agrikultura chair.

The group said agrarian reform should be complemented by improved support services such as credit, technical training and marketing support.

"Several reform beneficiaries have become worse off, rather than better off, because the support services previously given by landlords have not replaced by the government," the alliance said in a statement.

Alyansa also called for "an immediate stop to the rampant smuggling of agricultural products."

"Actions should include the creation of an oversight government-private sector body, similar to the abolished Office on Oversight Committee on Anti-Smuggling," the alliance said.

"This will provide a level playing field with other countries, considering our inadequately-limited support services compared to our international competitors," it said.

RP hosts programs as Asean culture hub

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo has created a national organizing committee to be chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and cochaired by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) to plan and execute programs in honor of the Philippines being named the first Asean Cultural Capital for 2010-2011.

The country will host the Asean Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (former SEAMES) meeting for Culture and Arts (Amca-former) while the NCCA will host the 4th Asean Festival of Arts, both of which will held in Clark Education City, Pampanga, on March 22-26.

"The Philippines, as a cultural gateway to Asean, proudness a heritage habitat Asean and arts-based tourism that can promote the creative industries and artistic products of our indigenous communities and those of member-countries of Asean and strengthen its cultural interaction with the different continents of the world," said Ms Arroyo.

The Philippines has ratified the Asean Charter where a newly established social-cultural committee has recognized the objective of "strengthening Asean awareness and building sense of regional community and social concern of all sectors by use as vulnerable groups to guarantee education for all, environmental sustainability, food security, and climate change adaptation and mitigation that can be facilitated through cultural and heritage communications and information in motivating the collective will to overcome poverty."

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OPINION

Small sacrifice

FOR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY, WE URGE Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile to resign before the May 10 elections to pave the way for the election of a new Senate president. The election of a new Senate president will help relieve the nation's fear and uncertainty over a power vacuum in the event of a failure of elections.

EDITORIAL

Only the other day, Malacañang again said that President Macapagal-Arroyo had no plans of extending her term beyond that prescribed in the Constitution. Chatito Planas, Ms Arroyo's deputy spokesperson, said that the President "will definitely step down on June 30." But this is a President who is arguably the most mistrusted chief executive the country has ever had. Streets out of 10 Filipinos do not trust her. Most of them cannot help but feel that Ms Arroyo is planning something sinister to ensure her stay in power after June 30.

Ms Arroyo has been busy covering all the bases. She has appointed generals who are members of PMA Class 1978, of which she is an honorary member, to key positions in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. She has appointed a retired police general, Leonardo Mendoza, as her executive secretary. She has caused former National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales as defense secretary. By May 17 all the justices of the Supreme Court will be her appointees and she is planning to appoint the new chief justice.

She is running for representative in the second district of her home province of Pampanga, and her election is a foregone conclusion. She is believed to be eyeing a run for speaker of the House of Representatives, and having cultivated the goodwill of a good number of reelectionists, she can easily win it. Many party-list groups are nominating people who will serve as members of Ms Arroyo's political "private army" in a showdown to the House.

Two Malacañang officials—Planas and Gonzalez—have been flouting the possibility that a military junta might take over in the event of a failed election. But while Planas has since changed her tune and said that the President would definitely step down on June 30, the fear persists. After all, this is a President who announced on Dec. 30, 2002 that she had decided not to run for president in 2004, saying that her "political efforts can only result in never-ending divisiveness," and she did run, after all.

Enrile can calm the people's fears by resigning before May 10 to pave the way for the election of a new Senate chief. Several legislators—Sen. Edgardo Angara, Representatives Rafael Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro City and Eduardo Joson of Nueva Ecija and former senator Ralph Recto, among them—have proposed this solution. It is a constitutional, civilian solution to a nagging problem that is fraying the nerves of the people.

The President, Vice President, Senate President and Speaker will all step down from power on June 30, so that in case of a failure of elections, no "interim" president can preside over the nation. Angara said the situation could be corrected if all 23 senators could elect a new Senate president who is not running for reelection and whose term would not end on June 30.

Enrile should not ascribe any ill motives to the proposal for him to step down before May 10. He has served the country well as Senate president. He has finished the inquiry into the controversial C-5 project of Sen. Manuel Villar and issued a report. He can now step down and let an interim president take over.

Angara has suggested that the Church, the business community, the academe and other groups help build a consensus on the election of a new Senate president and lend their prestige and moral influence to the process. He said that he himself did not want to take the initiative lest he be suspected of seeking the post.

Enrile once played the hero when he joined then Lt. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos, deputy AFP chief, in breaking away from the dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos on Feb. 22, 1986, setting in motion a chain of events that sealed with the downfall of Marcos in the historic Edsa Revolution. Now the times call for him to make the small sacrifice of stepping down from the Senate presidency to avert a possible power vacuum in June.

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Four-wind justices

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

JUSTICE CLINTO FERNÍNDEZ TEARTS HOW MY grandmother talked off judges who would rule in accordance with the prevailing political weathers or bubuyogs.

The old lady has passed on. Too bad. She would have horsewhipped today's Supreme Court justices for accommodating President Macapagal-Arroyo's pre-departure itch to pick retired justices, as quarters of nothingness.

Puno's 9-5 vote ignored Section 15 of Article VII of the Constitution which bans Cabinet members, their spouses and relatives within four degrees of consanguinity or affinity from appointment to the judiciary during the tenure of the President who appointed them. Not the justices mind their own set exemption for the judiciary. Nobody dies that.

"This is unauthorized construction and unwarranted," Augusto Sotto, 81, snapped. The good father had forgotten a refresher course on Constitutional Law 101, and "key principles of statutory construction" in his modern edition.

The Arroyo Court scrapped our law jurisprudence that frowned on the judiciary from backdoor justice—but threw out the entire Constitution, and amplified on its meaning, as Supreme Court justices.

"The President ... could foreclose the right of his successor to make appointments to these sensitive positions," Constitutional Commissioner Florenz Regalado, now Chief Justice Hilario Davide cautioned. "The term of the president is six years... Yet he can nominate or rule the country through appointments made about the end of his term..."

Justice Lucas Bersamin's closing pronouncement: "Interests of protests. But gives credit where credit is due. Quezon City Rep. Mutya Defensor sparked this conflagration.

Initial nominees for chief justice were before Chief Justice Reynato Puno hangs up his robes. Defensor prodded the eight-member Judicial and Bar Council earlier. The President would remove the list before the clock strikes 11.

He knew whom Defensor is winking from. "The easier is than of Jacob, but the hands are those of Esau."

Will the Court reconsider, if only to clamber off the limb it is perched on? "I am to reinvent to the Southern Star," Julius Caesar snapped when badgered to reconsider banishment of Publius Cimber. Here, constancy ends where the nearby political interests of the President begins.

Capricious statesmanship send the Arroyo Court, in retrospect, down 16 unpublished rooms that weighed more the course of cities. Justices publicly reconsidered their "final" judgments—only to reconsider this reconsidered decision.

A "final decision" on the Flight Attendants' and Stewards' Association of the Philippines charges of illegal firing morphed into a reinstatement order. That none-fitted into a reversal in the final "final."

Between 2001 and 2003, the Court reversed nine decisions already inscribed as "final and executory," Isidro Mamaril noted. Such that against three reconsideration bids granted in the previous 20 years.

Today's firestorm will not die out anytime soon. Unease over extension of the Court's retirement runs deep.

Our fears, as a people, are shaped by past betrayals. A Supreme Court that growls before a president—whistles up to lesser image bows the not-so-distant past: then Chief Justice Enrique Fernando trailing behind Imelda Marcos as parasol bearer.

"In many Filipinos, that picture of the country's chief magistrate (was) a point of indignant contempt," the outspoken campaign of the noble, observed Magsaysay lawmakers member Ibarla Gonzaga. "Did showed the extent to which the spirit of the judiciary had been sapped.

In the evening news, cubmeh-mouthed a Commission on Human Rights commissioner says how things play out between them, whenever they've promised to each other. It will be honor among, well, MBS-mostly-U.S.

That however is premised on Villar holding out of the park and leaving Arroyo lining his dust. Which he can't seem to do, despite the billions he has already laverished on his campaign. He doesn't do that, and his "sure" self-be weighed down by dozens of dissenting. Which will give GMA every excuse to declare a failure of elections, whatever their agreements.

The only target of—and opponent only for—a failed election is Senate President Franklin Drilon. Like Erap, Aquino pose no small amount of threat to GMA. Unlike Erap, Aquino can carry out that threat once he wins. And right now, that is what he is poised to do: win and carry out the threat. He is the leading presidential candidate. Senate survey results, his fast and furious climbing up, widening the gap between him and Villar who on the other hand has invested his climb and began falling down. That is where a failure of elections looms.

The question however is whether Aquino can widen his lead now Villar mulling on make any form of cheating, especially the invisible one of automation, visible. Or patent, or obvious, or blatant it makes the lives of spontaneous and universal rebellion. If the gap is small, it will create doubt, but not explosive outrage.

The point is not so much what if it can be done, if that lead can widen, the country no longer looks apathetic or pathetic enough to tolerate another 2004. The soldiers at least, if not their well-rewarded, or well-constructioned, leaders are restive, the calls from their elders, not least his and that of the cardinal archbishop, for them to go out and protest (he vote not likely to fall on deaf ears. More importantly, there's the universal, and explosive outrage that has greeted the Supreme Court's decision to allow GMA to appoint its new chief to argue for what would be imposed if the public is treated to something else, for more outrageous.

It ain't over till the fat lady sings. Or the 4:11 o'clock news.

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It ain't over

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SEVERAL MORE PIECES ARE COMING TO gether in a failure-of-elections scenario. That is quite apart from the Supreme Court breaking precedent to allow Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to appoint a new chief justice, though that is a huge piece in the puzzle as it is. The justices of course can always argue perfectly logically that they can exempt GMA from the ban because she is not a real president and they are not a real Supreme Court, but that's another story.

One new development is newly appointed AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Delfin Bangit designating as the PMP Chairman General Jesus Versoza for a line role that, such as Senate chair can be pleasant to those overlooking days. As an AFP spokesperson put it, if Mohammad won't go to the mountain, the mountain will come to Mohammad. As in typical metaphor only in that Versoza can prove to be prophetic and begin a real mountain under the time comes, an immovable obstacle to a tide of protest. Versoza of course has denied that GMA enabled their rise in reaction to his statement that he would oppose any move to extend her term, but the fact remains that GMA wasn't there. She apparently had more important things to do. That alone is proof of it.

What they talked about, well, nobody's telling. Bangit himself is talking only of security ensuring the Constitution, which is nice except that he has always thought GMA is the Constitution. Versoza, for his part, forgot to carry his issues of all sorts of contingencies, notably the AFP breaking tradition to enter his pardoners, sees early, thereby accelerating his ascent to the post. That is the Constitution he knows, the one that imprisons his conscience.

Yet another key less visible development is the overnight upcoming of party list organizations that are little more than "GMA bonus," as Eva Bonilla and Weldon Bello of iddicast point out. If Bonilla is to be believed, more than 30 percent of those are so, many of those organized by members of the party list clipped back that time around when nobody was looking. If these party list for organizations vote by hook or by crook, and probably more by crook than by hook, Bonilla warns, GMA will have her own "private army" in Congress.

That is a real concern if, as conjectures goes, the GMA bloc can hold on to half of the House. It would view presidential level but not for the rest. You have a holdover president with a Congress to go along with it, a Supreme Court to legitimize it, and an AFP to enforce it, what can you do?

All this of course is premised on one thing, one vital, portentous, humongous thing, which this time vital, portentous, humongous things is not being seen. Or at least it's not being talked about in the lurchpin in all this. That vital, portentous, humongous thing is. Stay by Aquino reign in the elections.

Allow Bonilla's wins the elections, there will be no failure of elections. He becomes president, GMA doesn't just get by without prosecution, she gets to reinvent herself and do a Corazon comeback, or at least reinvigorate the idea. But remove the possibility of Cha-Cha-ming presidency is as strong as many of Mayo Ebenda's sprawling high trees being able to avoid jobs in the event of a Haiti or Chile-type earthquake, are one subdy-forgot about that scenario.

Erap will be more problematic, but as with Bonilla, he looks somewhere near bonded for Rhabcarting anytime soon. He too.

He more importantly, Manny Villar wins the elections, there will be no failure of elections. It will be like Bonilla's winning the elections, except that Bonilla's not the kind of president Erap his word. Villar? It's a young on whose word is more binding, someone who said she wouldn't run or someone who says he came from the poor. It should be interesting to see

'Mental archaeology' on SC issue

DOUBLESS THERE'S SOME TRUTH TO TWO commentators' opinion regarding the recent Supreme Court decision to allow President Macapagal-Arroyo, 42 days before the June 10 of 63, to name the successor to Chief Justice Reynato Puno when he retires one year before the May 10 national elections. Former Presidential Legal Adviser and now Iloilo City mayoral candidate Raul Gonzalez opined that the SC decision is a "unique case" and is meant only to benefit the other Cabinet. Rambido Calimpan Aquino, writing in his Manila Standard Today column, opined that the "uniquely if not inconsistent" with which some individuals and groups reacted to the high court judgment "lend fresh notice considerations" that collides with the Court's position but from a dislike for the incumbent President."

Interestingly, both sides on the issue quote two prominent members of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J. and former Justice Florenz Regalado, as the authority with regard to divining the intent of the framers of the Constitution. The concise has been painted "mental archaeology" by Bernas, who is said to be 100% favorite candidate. It's easy to guess whose handiwork all these is, but this is conjecture at best.

Regalado, after the weekend I parsed over the high court decision penned by Justice Lucas Bersamin and concurred in by eight other justices, as well as the dissenting opinion by Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales, the concurring opinion of Justice Roberto Abad, and the separate opinions of Justices Eduardo Nachura and Arturo Brion. It should be noted that five of the nine justices who voted for the decision felt that the President's appointing power extends to the entire collective (which presumably includes SC current vacancies at the time) courts, whereas the four justices felt it should apply only to the chief justice. While Puno and Justices Antonio Carpio and Cancio Garcia abstained (Associate Justice Presbitero Velasco Jr. answered in Nachura's separate opinion and Justices Rodolfo Ureña and Mariano del Castillo concurred in Brion's separate opinion.

* * *

Much of the criticism centered on the fact that the Court did not only overturn but "quickly rose to the doctrine of the university and longstanding" the previous ruling in the case of Jardeleza vs. Executive Secretary, the issue of the high court in 1998. The case involved two lower court appointments made by President Fidel Ramos during his last weeks in office, which the Court struck down. It's now being touted by Arroyo critics as unequivocally disallowing GMA from making appointments to the courts two months plus, including before the elections and up to the end of her term. As the Court admitted in Valenzuela decision, the prohibition against presidential appointment in the judiciary was directed against two types of appointments: those made for buying votes and those made for partisan considerations. In fact, the case was influenced by the Court's decision in Aytona v. Castillo, nullifying the 1961 appointments of politicians made by outgoing President Carlos Garcia after the proclamation of newly elected President Diosdado Macapagal and just hours before the latter's inauguration.

The latest decision stressed that Valenzuela held the door open for appointments by the President that are "few and so spaced as to afford some assurance of deliberate action and careful consideration of the need for the appointment and the appointee's qualifications." Evidence was that a few Garcia appointments were upheld. It also stressed that the creation of the Judicial and Bar Council, with its "exhaustive and deliberate prior process," effectively "limits the appointing power... by an outgoing Chief Executive to the midst of the appointments."

* * *

Nuance in media accounts recently invited to discuss with Cuban redistributor Sen. Leo Lapid at the art gallery of impressario Boots Anson-Roa, where the guiding person was Pampanga's defiant creation of the candidates. The notion of the storied political clan of Lapid is a good figure. Among the information we gathered was that among some 380 lots Lapid filed in the 14th Congress, two had become law, one of them the grant of free legal assistance to poor litigants. Some other good, coming from the University of the Philippines, I studied as assistant to the regent of the Ateneo College of Law, the legendary political scientist Fr. Bonifacio Ortiz, and this put me in close touch with the Lapid family (the late Joker Lapid, New 01 institutionalized, thanks to Lapid).

* * *

Later I became close Jobes Arroyo a second gathering and sought the impressions of his former student. He said Lapid is "a man of many parts," in the field of local government, he said, except for Sen. Sotto. Pimentel who authored the Local Government Code, no one can beat Lapid's grasp of the intricacies of governance, since he served for three years as vice governor of Pampanga and for nine years as governor. "What the senators have any problems on local government," we asked Lapid. "Always," replied the Lapid fan. "an amazing knack for getting the public pulse accurately." On controversial issues of national concern, they would ask him, "Tanggapan ko 'yon ng sao?" And his answer was invariably correct. Lapid is not as flamboyant as Sotto, but he's more effective," Arroyo noted. "He does not deliver speeches, yet he makes a point to be present especially when voting for a bill comes up, so the people can judge his voting record and position on various issues."

What comes next for fresh graduates?

GRADUATION DAY FOR MOST JUST A FEW WEEKS AWAY. And as that day gets nearer, I feel an odd mixture of anxiety and excitement. I feel anxious about the possibility of not continuing the last two decades of my life as a student. Inside I think my friends and pass all my courses, having a single night of drama: sleep still continue to be out of the question. At the same time, I feel very excited about finally getting the highly prized 19 diploma, which means believe it's a ticket to a bright future. After all, years coming the track board exams and papers of the course's primary names my gains are some bragging rights.

Graduating from the recently declared national university, however, is more than just something to be proud of. It's an honor, but it entails responsibility, either private called "Pahalagi ng Bayan," as it has also yourself with the responsibility of giving back to the people, whose hard-earned money saved you from paying an arm-and-a-leg tuition fees. Although UP has engaged offering a very accessible, quality tertiary education owing to the 200 percent increase in tuition fees, its students continue to be burdened with tuition fees, miscellaneous and other fees. Many are barred into activities, where their classmates in the society itself. I myself have artists/scientific talent part in several rallies and integrated with the masses in order to deeply understand their plight.

I do not question the proposition that because we as UP are subsidized by the state, then we are duty bound to serve the people after graduation. What I question, though, is that it also seems to me that those who graduate from private colleges and universities are free from the responsibility of offering change in the country. The country is reeling hard from poverty, political instability, corruption, and other social ills as well. Every effort to overcome these is necessary for its redemption. This does not mean, of course, that UP graduates should grumble about it.

I have always been a believer in the saying that education is not confined within the four walls of a classroom. So I have not a few classes in order to help organize and mobilize the students, and to deepen political consciousness in relation to it as a unique possibility. I also joined campaign to promote the rights of different marginalized sectors. If there is one thing that makes my college years fulfilling, it is the fact that I have somehow contributed to the nation, even though my contribution pales in comparison with those made by several activists, many of whom were just my age.

My point is, because investors aren't only one class that before graduated from the university, he professes made him promise to serve the country and not to be eaten up by an ailing, corrupt and rotten system. I and my classmates, feeling a passion to do the same, then made a similar promise.

But deep down, I know it was easier said than done. For how many UP graduates have left the country in favor our former colonial masters? How many have embraced our daily traditional politics and turned their backs on the clarifying masses? How many have turned themselves into greedy capitalists, shamelessly exploiting their own kind?

I am not alone when I feel anxious about after graduation. Pursuing a higher degree, though, seems to be no longer an option. Four years of taking tuitorious exams and quizzes, turning papers, and making presentations have made, to use the language of economics (my course), my diminishing marginal utility for studies increasingly. Getting a job in the capitalist world, moreover, does not sound promising. If one considers the dismal employment statistics being reported on radio, TV and the newspapers. Never mind that I am quite biased against capitalism and, like Karl Marx, I attribute most of the world's problems to the way capitalism works.

Graduation is and to open a new chapter in one's life. In this seemingly godforsaken country, where exploitation has become the norm, that new chapter might not be exciting. Finishing college might mean starting a new life of being unemployed and penniless. Despite the assurances of friends that I have a good career ahead of me, I cannot help but entertain the thought that I will end up as unemployed as many years after graduation. But to worry about my future, maybe understanding of a person who clearly sees the ills of the society and who hesitates to do something about them.

Private graduates, like me, face a problem far bigger than the high probability of not finding a decent job. While we preoccupy ourselves with our own economic worries, the whole nation is plunging into a dark pit of inequality, injustice and chaos. As we exit the academe, therefore, we either take the more traveled path that will lead us to the fulfillment of our selfish, materialistic desires or pursue the less traveled road of helping build a better nation. And we have to make the decision now.

Rolando Bautista, 19, is a BA Social Sciences (Economics) senior at the University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College.

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An exciting 'Harapan'

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL team behind "Harapan: The Pro-Presidential Debate," which aired over ANC Sunday night.

The show generated so much interest that it became the network's highest-trending topic (worldwide) on Twitter, as local Internet users tweeted comments and questions to the candidates who showed up for the debate.

Unlike other debate shows (some of them on ANC) that devote viewers to boredom with a string of speeches prepared to suit the moderating candidates who hide their time with their notes, the first debate featuring aspirants to the vice presidency was fast-paced and unique.

There were also no speeches and entertaining points on the usual formats, including "one-on-one" between two candidates, and a running tabulation of "wow" ratings among groups of viewers gathered in various locations around the country.

Yet some of the best parts of the debate were quiet. Senior Minor of the UP Library, Rizza Fernando of Bagumbayan-Volunteers for a New Philippines, Leon Leganda of the Nationalist People's Coalition, Michael Abaya of Partido ng Manggagawa, Jay Jimenez of Bangon Pilipinas, Glenn Rai (his name for first televised debate featuring the vice-presidential aspirants, it was strange that Edu Manzano, incumbent vice president, was not part of the presentation. Lakas-Kampi chose not to take part in "Harapan," and to think that Manzano's missteps have been complaining that the administration party was "neglecting" him and dooming his chances of the polls.

* * *

47 THE end of "Harapan," the network aired the final results of the online poll on the candidates' credibility. Noynoy got the highest rating, with 38 percent saying he was the most credible candidate. He was followed by Roxas (15 percent), Fernando (13 percent), Nasry (11 percent), Leganda (4 percent), and Bonoan (4 percent).

But in SMS-ON, Roxas topped Commodore Jun Jun Casanova, who is considering such a frank, exciting and time-active forum. I liked it that each candidate was allowed to bring in some 200 bloggers to the venue at La Consolacion College, leading the proceedings the air of an old-fashioned Cambodian-style campaign, their led Fabian Abocajadis managed the discussions, skillfully keeping the candidates to their allotted time slots.

Hard it that the network plans a follow-up to "Harapan," this time featuring what ANC (vice moderators called a "big-name" set-up of pairs of presidential candidates, to tackle the answers' interactions they think of. I hope they keep the same fast-paced, suspenseful format that has suddenly made the election exciting again.

* * *

SEN. Lito Lapid, who is running for re-election, met with a group of women in media last week and, even if commentators had dubbed him the "chairman of the committee on dinner" in the first set, Lapid had plenty to say on women's issues.

Foremost of his concerns was to roll-in about the recent passage of the Free Legal Assistance Act, which indeed provides free legal assistance to indigent litigants in general, but not specifically to women and law firms who agree to take on the cases of poor clients. "The Public Attorney's Office is already overburdened," he told us, and the measure was designed to broaden the pool of lawyers who would offer their legal skills to the poor. So they the accused or accusers, in criminal or civil cases. True, judges could appoint lawyers on the spot for defendants without counsel, but, as he said, "those cases are sometimes not taken seriously by lawyers [who] are appointed only [as] an opportunity to earn clients or legal fees."

To make such free cases worth the lawyers' time, the measure, which was signed into law last July 23, provides for tax deductions for lawyers or partnerships which render legal aid services. At a briefing paper memo: "This measure should induce renowned and distinguished firms and lawyers in the practice as their services shall still be competent, and consequently encourage the use better services." Certainly, this is a step towards equalizing access to justice even for the poor, for as President Ramon Magsaysay famously said: "He who has less in life should have more in law."

* * *

LAPID also had lessons to share from the campaign. These done, he said, he prefers to visit markets, plazas and other places where streets are gathered. "But my experience in supervising campaign rallies," he told us, "has have to spend not just for the stage, sound systems and decorations, but also for 'eating' in the people and keeping them entertained."

So to the question how many seats of time and thematic since a candidate would be attracting supporters, anyway people who would eventually vote for the candidate and are partly supporters, Sen. Lapid said he's much prefers "going by where the people are" and attending those out in areas the Beck and convince them to give him his vote. Though he currently ranks among the top, undecided "senatoriables," Lapid says he prefers to run campaign "using votes hand-to-mouth to secure a spot within the Top 12.

Certainly, being a retired senior star can be to mention a few: vice superstars and governors) Lapid, also resident hero, giving them advice to better self-esteem and their reputation. "I tried to have the same fan base as FPJ," said Lapid, referring to the late superstar Fernando Poe Jr., a former presidential candidate. Like "the King's" action movies, especially in Mindanao, marriages, we tend to take his movies personally. "When I have my back turned too generous, you can have their call me: 'Sen. arnold, turn around!'" And if the script calls for him to die in a movie, "we always have to make sure that I'm not the one shot and showing my spirit rising from the grave." Obviously, he's hoping the same thing will happen in this now hot for the Senate.

Betrayed by the New York Times

MY APOLOGIES, IN ADVANCE, THE COLUMN title about to a shameless attempt at a rhetorical stunt to abuse a few of the so-called media/film at work.

Headlines, you see, are an information-suspension device. A headline packs an entire story or more, into a few words, so that a reader is able and that is necessary way to better sometimes a headline, or a caption or scripted, or even an entire story, can betray the truth and, by giving a distorted picture of the subject of the coverage, is contrary it makes who has time to read only today's column. Only many likely end up with a distorted picture of the column's thesis or of the column itself.

I mention can come in many forms. In the case of the recent New York Times article on Rhonda Lanata, written by Rochelina Dimbi, an Inquirer online intern, and awarded the Pulitzer Prize.

It urged Bernardo Quimpo, the cousin of presidential candidate Iris Noynoy Aquino and the chief operating officer of the holding company that owns Lanata, to either turn up to or also perhaps "disappear." Quimpo would later or be linked to him in the Times story; it also noted, however, that "the story fell markedly short of the Times' usually rigorous standards. We say this because the story purported to give an overall perspective on both separatist reform and the Gamba case, but almost entirely left out the perspective of the Philippine media, to be unscrupulous to the Aquino or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program itself."

I am of the same mind. I found myself disappointed by the story, not for the many lapses of logic and reasoning, but because it paints a portrait of a contentious issue using only one color (or to speak) in the reporter's palette. Because these problematic sources were not properly identified the standard formula that is so-called "political sources"), the mostly American audience the story was written for (I also appeared on the front page of the Times-owned International Herald Tribune) could not possibly be expected to appreciate the story's limitations. (Note that, like any other member of the working press, I use sources of my own.)

The story was filed by the Times' bureau chief for Southeast Asia. (I gather that Rochelina Dimbi is a Jaguar Times intern.) Quimpo and Lanata, judging by the discussion on the "talk page" of the own Wikipedia entry, a controversial figure in the own right.)

The editorial referred to the use of one source, Quimpo, to help explain the "complex issues" in the story's most sweeping areas: "Most farmers' groups, scholars and businessmen question the deeper issues figures," referring to the land distribution statistics offered by the Department of Agrarian Reform. The story used another source, UP professor Roland Simbulan, to substantiate another blanket statement: "What is more, lawmakers, most of whom come from large landowning families, indeed loopholes in the program, critics say."

As I argued in a Facebook "Note": "Nothing wrong with that per se, but both the gallery [sic] and the conferral Simbulan are known in this country [necessarily, not by the story's predominantly American audience] as outspoken critics of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or the courses of Hacienda Luisita or both. Is it fair to say that these are the only Filipinos who can speak about this many American readers want?

My good friend Jake Conde, the Philippine correspondent for the New York Times, has responded on my online posts. Displeased by an influential paper's bias in favor of Noynoy [and the Philippine Graphic's editor in chief, the online exchange of ideas has been instructive, to say the least.

Allow me to speak directly to two of the issues raised in that fascinating exchange, and to quote some posts without, it is my earnest hope, offending sensibilities or betraying confidences.

No one is above criticism. In responding to my first post, Cobey wrote: "One-sided? The story may seem sympathetic to the farmers but it is not one-sided." Well, it is one-sided if you refer only to those who do not like its point of view. I hope I have misunderstood Cobey, but the way that journalists is framed suggests to me only one possible interpretation. As I wrote in my Note: "Let's start with the basics. Me newspapers or media organizations are not above criticism. Like all institutions, they are subject to the laws of libel, like a belabored of the Mindanao's elections, but Cobey's first parenthetical remark — 'Well, it may sound one-sided only to those who do not like its point.' — suggests that he thinks the NYT story deserves to be criticized only by those who, presumably, that only 'those who do not like its point' will criticize it. Surely that is a mistake." Unfortunately I am no longer find Cobey's reply to this first point.)

The critic's many shortcomings do not negate his criticisms. "The success, of course, does not pretend to be even remotely infallible. Errors, the correction box, the active letters page, the independent opinion section, the readers' ombuds, the weekly news ombuds section, etc." But some may are in a position to criticize, and we are part of the beyond to conduct any form of media criticism. Indeed, by pointing out the one-sidedness of the reporting, the newspaper's editorial may have given the impression that it was engaged in self-criticism. Well, it is not.

I am only reply with a quote from today "to be more careful calling people ideological ink-pricks, especially when they're people and newspapers that have also given some sympathetic play to the issues you've championed." On the left, from the best of friends will disagree some times. That does not automatically make them enemies.

* * *

Jerry@inquirer.com.ph/jcbonoy.wordpress.com

Young Blood

Rebelander Bautista

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something call below.—Ed.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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Our 90,000 jobless graduates

UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG many of the new graduates who will be entering the labor force soon April. Of the estimated half a million graduates this March, more than 90,000 will not be able to find work despite having invested four or five years and a fortune in a college education. We challenge the presidential aspirants to present a new policy that will address the grave problems of unemployment in general and youth joblessness in particular.

The figures cited here are April 2009 unemployment data from the National Statistics Office, showing an 18.5 percent unemployment rate among graduates-bearing a college diploma, as against the only marginally lower 18 percent unemployment among those the unemployment rate is 2.1 percent.

The graduates of 2010 comprise only 22 percent of every 100 children who entered elementary education 16 years ago. Of these 12 percent, seven will take a technical course, but only three will pass. Of the three, only one will be able to find a job that fits his educational attainment. The rest will find work that has nothing to do with their courses.

However, the latest NSO employment figures propagate myths instead of truths. Unemployment has been kept down by removing from the labor force those who have already stopped looking for work and even those who have been looking for work for six months but have not found any. Starting in 2005, by a mere redefinition of terms, one million Filipinos were taken off from unemployment rolls just as the Arroyo administration could claim that unemployment has gone down from the historical average of 10 percent to 7 percent.

The country needs a short-term, massive public employment program and a long-term economic and [illegible] policy reorientation to generate decent jobs. The private sector, the engine of employment generation since the Marcos years, has failed miserably in this regard. Its policy direction has been kept hostage to neoliberal economics, which should be entombed as well.

People's organizations, not local politicians, must administer the public employment program so that it will not just be used for patronage and so that it will promote decent work instead of precarious situations. But a strategic jobs policy demands the political will to reverse the neoliberal policies of deregulation, liberalization and privatization, and to uphold domestic industry and agriculture.

—GERRY BYERS,
vice chair,
Partido ng Manggagawa
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'Unholy trinity' to blame for '43

THE SHAMED FORCES OF The Philippines, the Court of Appeals, and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo comprise an "unholy trinity" that makes sure the Philippine democracy is crumpled, and that there are humiliated and basic human rights violated as a matter of course.

The 43 illegally detained health workers, kept in solitary confinement of physical, emotional and psychological abuse, courtesy of the Court of Appeals which tacked their petition for a writ of habeas corpus, to office, the Court of Appeals justified all the atrocities committed by the military against the 43.

Every minute in illegal detention is to instill torture, every minute a physical and emotional torture. The longer the 43 health workers are detained in the military camp, the more they become vulnerable. Worst of all, this Court of Appeals decision sends a chilling message to ordinary citizens armed with revelation of the precepts civil and democratic rights.

Rebellion of this detained health workers are afraid that the longer the 43 are in detention, the more they will experience abuses and violations of their rights. They have all the reasons to feel that way, as their rights were brazenly violated as soon as they were arrested. Coming from several families, some of them may have been living more comfortably than the others or may have the chance to live a better life. Others may be so poor like the ones they have seen behind themselves in slums. They may be missing their parents and loved ones while they are serving in barangays where no medical practitioners exist yet.

They may have different backgrounds and levels of commitment, but they have one thing in common: all of them were actively serving to harness better skilled health workers. The illegal arrest suddenly distanced them from this noble intention and has emerged deprived people, whom their health workers could have been serving were of badly needed health care.

How do we now define the injustice done to the 43 health workers and the rest of the Filipino people? Just think of the AFP members who blockaded, detained and continuously terrorized them. Think of this decision of the Court of Appeals. Think of GMA whose power and irresponsible abuse become ignominiously to go unpunished.

—HORACIO CASTILLO III,
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LETTERS

Evangelista's 'ad' an appalling read

I HAVE BEEN READING THE inquirer since I was young. It always helps me to do research when what is happening in the country. Dr. Harris [illegible] to read a column by the Evangelista titled "This is a violation of." Honestly, I was disturbed by her piece, especially when she used the line teenage pain. Almost my friends from their age can with their plastic bangles." What kind of person [illegible] still do a thing like that?

I know that condom use is already rampant here in the Philippines. If we look at it, you don't need the Reproductive Health bill to be approved. Because condoms are already accessible in nearby Mercury drug stores and 7-Eleven, Common sense, however, would tell us that the use of condoms is wrong.

If our parents used condoms in the 1980s, probably me and I would not be here today. It would be unfair to suppress the gift of life for the mere convenience.

Sex is good and pleasurable, but it has a higher purpose which is to procreate. The use of condoms will "artificially" hinder conception. Stop addressing this higher purpose.

I think that Evangelista's articles are "fearless," but not "informed."

—RAHAB L. TABLIZO,
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A PART of the R-11 community in Navotas, in the demolition's aftermath

Navotas demolition lacked basic kindness and decency

THE MONDAZE DEMOLITION OF houses in R-11, Navotas early in the morning of March 7, where officials' families were last exercising their duty, is indeed a picture of inhumanity as Denis Murphy of the Urban Poor Associates writes in his commentary titled, "Inhumanity." (Inquirer, 3/10/11)

We saw how nudity and officials' spouses of the local government and Little Kristal were to assist dismantling houses. With some fine to the members of the demolition team just because they did not like the fine orange pan. Almost six houses from their supplies with their plastic bangles." What kind of person [illegible] still do a thing like that?

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—RAHAB L. TABLIZO,
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There must be a set of factors to consider in making a survey. How can one possibly get an answer if one was not interview (do not have knowledge of what you are talking about)? The majority of those I ask to leave no idea of the real contents of the RH bill. A "yes" answer given by a survey respondent who does not have an understanding of the RH bill cannot be a reliable reply.

I suggest that those who conduct surveys make sure that respondents are fully informed about the RH bill so that their findings will be credible.

—MARIA THERESA
ALMARIEL,
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Surveys tracking responses to reproductive health bill

ARE SURVEYS REALLY RELIABLE? Based on an online survey, the proponents of the Reproductive Health (RH) bill are saying that the majority of Filipinos are for it. But only recently pro-life groups came up with survey findings showing otherwise. Do the surveys being conducted nowadays still have integrity?

Media professionals must cleanse their ranks

THE POWERFUL MEDIA (HEAD OF A COIN- one side is the face of professional men and women who observe the ethical standards of journalism and broadcasting; the other is the face of those who receive money, favors or even vacations from those who use their services.

Unfortunately, the latter is becoming money to exchange for "media-rich PR services," has been going on for decades, especially during elections. The oracle and collect, defend and collect in BC-DC journalism has now been replaced by BC-BC-CC-DC or, in simpler terms, where BC means bully and collect, CC means pago and collect, and DC means and collect. It is very likely that only a small percentage of media people are not like this. But usually they are the more prominent ones in the profession.

The big challenge for the owners of print and broadcast media is to have profitable but professionally responsible organizations. In a purely free enterprise, the latter predominantly via media auspices. Some are profitable because they offer quality services that they can be proud of, are well-heard, widely and had views and reports. Consequently they attract more readers, listeners and viewers who in turn attract more advertisers.

But in our country, many media organizations play the game and allow corrupt politicians and other vested interest groups to use them in exchange for huge value of money.

As part of the silent majority I salute the media people who have maintained their professionalism, and who condemn those who have sold their souls.

If the 45 media owner wants a better Philippines, it must clean its midst first to have the moral authority to convince the rich to follow suit. This is an urgent call because too much time is being wasted in the development of our nation apart and bringing our country to most chaos and the future of democracy.

To complete the transformation in our society, the other sectors must likewise clean their ranks.

And to begin, the media professionals must realize it is their responsibility to use the media's influence to expose the illicit and unethical practices of the RH bill, the Supreme Court, the Congress, the Commission on Elections, the Ombudsman, the Presidency, and the Office of the Solicitor General.

—ATTY. ROGELIO VINCENT SERAPIO JR.,
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Bansal ignored three other complaints vs Carpio

COMMODORE B. BANSAL (ret.) HAS ADMITTED TO solons, defended Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio from complaints filed against him before the Judicial Bar Council. The complaints questioned his integrity and qualifications for the post of chief justice.

He said that the complainants questioning the legality of the naturalization of his wife, a Vietnamese by birth, was anonymous and, therefore, not supported by evidence. But an anonymous letter need not be dismissed outright but should be investigated by the proper authorities, especially when it concerns a member of the judiciary whose integrity should be above reproach.

Bansal ignored the fact that three other senators have formally complained against Justice Carpio before the JBC. And they did not fail to give their full citizenship degree the passport Carpio wields as a member of the Supreme Court. These are Joel Chua, former vice-dean of the Foundation University of Immigrants City, businessman Jinffle Cruz and Col. Brigido Montes Jr., member of the advisory council of Transparency International Philippines and owner of Kings Court Construction Co.

Chua reminded the JBC that Justice Carpio was nominated as a Supreme Court expert as one of those who reviewed the code of ethics of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines by spending lavishly and unconstitutionally for a candidate in the 2007 elections in 1969.

Both Cruz and Montes questioned Justice Carpio's role in deciding cases filed before the Supreme Court despite valid portions by some of the justices as infinite himself because of alleged conspiracies with other justices he appointed in the case. Cruz assailed Carpio for not inhibiting himself in deciding an administrative complaint against a Quezon City judge despite his connections with the justices concerned in the case. The charges against the judge he investigated are: ignorance of the law and grave abuse of discretion were dismissed. Likewise, Montes claimed that Carpio should have inhibited himself on valid grounds in deciding a case against a construction company, Asiaworld. The case is considered, by members of the judiciary, must be a person of proven competence, integrity, probity and independence."

A higher standard should be imposed for the chief justice of the Supreme Court, which is tasked to administer the judicial branch, including the Court of Appeals and all other lower courts.

As Chua said, the appointment of Carpio as chief justice would "tarnish" the reputation of the Supreme Court for integrity, independence and probity.

Because if the Supreme Court is the last bastion of freedom and justice in our country, the JBC, and ultimately the President, should see to it that the chief justice who is appointed should meet strictly the standards set by the Constitution.

—RUSSEL SABIDO,
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INQUIRER mobile news

INQUIRER BREAKING NEWS: Two separate vehicular accidents, a few minutes apart, cause traffic jam along southbound lane of C-5 in Pasig City, says Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

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Across the NATION

Zambales mining outposts demolished

NEWSBRIEFS

■ TAGUM CITY

Bus carrying miners falls into ravine

AT LEAST 40 people were hurt, three of them in critical condition, when a bus ferrying miners off Apex Mines Hill into a 60-foot ravine in Barangay Mawac, Mabini, Compostela Valley, on Sunday, police said.

Senior Supt. Aaron Aquino, provincial police chief, said that when the bus, operated by Del Sur to Fighters Bus Line and driven by Joseph Moran, stopped on a downhill curve road, a portion of the ground collapsed, causing the vehicle to slip and hurtle down the ravine.

Most of the victims suffered minor injuries and were brought to Bishop Reglas Memorial Hospital and Davao Regional Hospital for treatment. Nikalan Lee, Inquirer Mindanao

■ MASBATE

Village chair held for illegal firearms

A BELLADO chief was arrested for possession of unlicensed rifle firearms early Wednesday during a raid on his house in Placer town in Masbate.

Benedicto Ramolita of Barangay Tanague was arrested on the basis of a search warrant issued by a Sorsogon Regional Trial Court judge, said Senior Supt. Pablo Bandigay, provincial police director. Recovered from him were two M-16 rifles and a .45-cal. pistol.

The Commission on Elections has listed Marbella as an election hot spot, while the police have put it under "special watch" due to its history of political violence. Jonas Cabiles Sotto, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Election-related violence: 2 killed

WEAPON-related violence killed two more in the election-related attacks on Monday and Sunday.

Ishmael Lumalang, 33, was shot dead at around 1:30 p.m. on Monday, while Jose Felan, said to be a ward leader of Sen. Pascual Mayor Zenaida Lucero, was killed in Barangay Bunang in San Pascual on Sunday. Behind the night before, Maj. Harold Cabunoc, spokesperson of the Army's 10th Infantry Division, blamed on Pvt. Gamaniel Bisa, said.

Maj. Gen. Ruperto Pabustan, division commander, has directed soldiers to intensify its campaign against armed groups in the province. Jonas Cabiles Sotto, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ CITY OF CALAPAN

Mindoro candidates sign peace covenant

OVER 60 leaders led a "harmony" and a peace covenant signing by local and congressional candidates in the first district of Occidental Mindoro, with the theme "De Cisco! Ex Bronze! Silencio!"

Fr. Andy Peter Licht, convener of the Mindoro Movement for Good Governance, said the activity would be duplicated in the second district on March 27 in Pinamalayan town, and in other parishes in the province. Marlon C. Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ EVENT

IBP chapter to host regional convention

THE INTEGRATED Bar of the Philippines (IBP) chapter in Albay will host the 5th IBP Bicolandia Regional Convention on April 8-9 in Legazpi City.

It will also hold a seminar on continuing legal education during the convention to be held at Hotel St. Ellis.

The meeting will be attended by about 600 lawyers in Bicol, six IBP governors and national officers. Inquirer Southern Luzon

By Robert Basnuga and Cesar Villa
Inquirer Central Luzon

MASINLOC, ZAMBALES—AT LEAST TWO MINING outposts here were demolished last week on the order of the municipal council, but the firm's owner called the move political harassment.

Officials and personnel of Compañia Minera Tubapco Inc. (formerly Coco Mining Corp.) said the demolition was carried out by the municipal engineering personnel and policemen without a court order.

CMTI security personnel said the demolition team and armed policemen, some of whom were not in uniform, disarmed them as they destroyed the structures on Friday.

Artemio Lim, CMTI chair, said her candidacy for mayor against Desiree Edora, wife of incumbent Mayor Anna Edora, was the reason behind the harassment.

"They think that they can intimidate me by this show of force, even using illegal means to do so. But I will not back down. I will file charges against every last one of them instead," she said.

She also questioned the approval of the demolition, as shown in the council's Feb. 17 resolution, which came even before the resolution was passed.

Lawyer Vishal Belizo, who represents CMTI, said the municipal government could not use a resolution to order the demolition. "That is usurpation of judicial functions by Masinloc's legislative body," he said.

In a telephone interview, Mayor Edora confirmed that an court order covered the demolition. "But a court order is not really needed because they are a nuisance there. They can be removed without involving the court in this," he said.

He said the security personnel manning the outposts were preventing government agencies from entering that area.

"The poor way to Coto mines, there are at least 100 families. How can we give them basic services if those people won't let us in?" he said.

He dismissed Lim's accusation that the move was politically motivated.

"It just so happened that there will be election soon. But we're doing this to remove those people there as we can offer them basic services," he said.

PRICE DROP
Corn farmers in Isabela transport their harvests to the milling station with their trusty carabaos and carts. Drought has affected the quality of corn, which now sells for about P12 a kilo, down from P15 in previous harvests.

Brief rain, short-lived jubilation in Zamboanga

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ELISEO Macapili, a 62-year-old farmer and eggplant farmer, jumped with glee when it began to rain on his drought-hit field on Sunday afternoon.

The feeling was short-lived, however. "I thought it was real rain," Macapili said as the downpour turned into just a drizzle.

The rain, brought about by cloud-seeding operations, came from 11:30 a.m. to 12:12 noon, according to Aldefegil Bilbil, a technician of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

It was "not significant," preceding only 2 millimeters of rainfall, he said.

But Bilbil pointed out a bigger volume in the mountainous areas, though still "not significant to address the drought."

Before Sunday midnight, Macapili said, lightning and thunderstorms had given him hope for more rain. "I was not wrong, there was indeed heavy rain," he told the Inquirer in Chavacano.

Allid said the midnight rain, which lasted until 3:15 a.m. on Monday, registered 79.6 mm of rainfall, "enough to flood some areas ways."

Rainfall was monitored in the higher areas of the eastern and western portions of the city until 7 a.m., he said.

Maria Dolores Dalisay, spokesperson of the Zamboanga City Water District, said water level in the basin of the water district area registered a marked increase of 74.12 meters above sea level (masl) after the cloud seeding on Sunday afternoon.

"There was no effect on [the cloud seeding," Galvez said. At 11 a.m. on Saturday, the water level was at 73.40 masl, she said.

After Sunday's rain, it was 74.18 masl and on Monday morning, 74.40.

"In fact, we received reports of flooding near the watershed area. We hope this will continue so we could have enough reserve," Galvez said.

Alejo Rojas, assistant manager of the water district, said the rise in water level was related to the intermittent convergence zone experienced in the Visayas, which triggered the heavy rain on Sunday night.

Rojas, however, said salt intrusions on chosen somehow helped produce the rain.

"Despite the dry season and extremely hot weather in the town proper, we received reports from our station in the watershed areas that cloud seeding yielded rains, but only in the mountainous parts," he said.

With the rain and seemingly stable water reserve, Rojas ordered the opening of water valves in the west coast north outlets "We usually open the line at 3 p.m. but now since we have water, we ordered to make it operational immediately."

Since March 6, the city government had nine cloud-seeding missions, according to city agricultural Rosalinda Palmiz. "It's not felt or experienced here, but out of nine sorties, three of the flights were successful and three were on March 7, 8 and 21."

For every cloud-seeding sortie, the government spends P50,000.

"What we experienced last Sunday afternoon was due to cloud-seeding. The size we had last Sunday night was natural rain and we hope to have more rains this summer in order to help water farmers," Palmiz said.

Bombs fall near house of Ampatuan mayor

COTABATO CITY—Mortar bombs fell near the house of a town mayor in Maguindanao as founding eight hours after a gasoline explosion rocked a bustling area on a gas station in Ampatuan town, police said.

Senior Supt. Alex Linares, acting provincial police chief, said at least 10 bombs landed near Ampatuan Mayor Zaynab Sangki's residential compound that left two of his security escorts slightly wounded.

Linares said the mortar attacks began at about 7 p.m. after an unexplained explosion that was heard at the Phoenix Philippines gas station, which is owned by the mayor, in the Ampatuan town proper, about 50 meters from the municipal hall and 40 meters from the police office and headquarters of the Army's 40th Infantry Battalion Alpha company.

The pump boy, who requested that his identity not be revealed for safety and alerted the police.

Linares said police investigators were still determining the connection between the bombing attempts and the mortar shelling. "I think they are related. When the suspects failed to set off bombs at the gas station, they fired mortars toward Mayor Sangki's house," he said.

Linares said the motive could be business rivalry, personal grudge or extortion.

It was the second attack on Sangki's house since January. Sybelle Ortemdes, Inquirer Mindanao

Panlilio volunteers hope for another 'miracle'

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—About 3,000 volunteers in the 2007 election campaign of Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio gathered here on Sunday vowing to produce another miracle for him and other Liberal Party (LP) candidates running in the province regarded as the bailiwick of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Are we ready to work for another miracle?" Noriza Gozenga, spokesperson of Kasingan, asked the crowd who stayed on for a program after the Mass. The crowd agreed.

The reunion was held in time for the blessing of the Crusada 2010 and LP headquarters.

Others, like Irwin Naron, have turned in Bible verses to take courage in Panlilio, a Catholic priest, prepares for a rematch against former Board Member Lilia Pineda, a close ally of Ms. Arroyo.

Naron said the "miracle," which saw Panlilio surviving a supposed electoral fraud by 1,147 votes, was undone when the Commission on Elections on Feb. 11 declared Pineda the winner after a revision of votes cast in the 2007 contest.

This time, Naron pinned his chin under the Biblical verse, "Do not be afraid, I am with you."

Amid the jubilant mood, Panlilio noticed the absence of several former supporters.

"We lost some, we gained new ones," he said, without naming them.

Businesswoman Lolita Alson had cut ties as early as 2007 when Panlilio refused to heed her advice. Months before the breakup, the provincial government fired Alson's son for illegal quarrying.

Businessman Benn Simeon left the inner circle as he and Panlilio disagreed over development plans and social projects.

The governor's former legal officer, Maria Elissa Mesa, gathered to return to the private sector. He former chief of staff, Archie Reyes, joined the Subic Club Alliance for Development Council.

Others left, unable to stand the work style of provincial administrator Victor Dulce, who, over the last months, has implemented Panlilio's austerity-time drive at the capitol.

"The three years were really difficult. Outside and inside the capitol, I was met with resistance mainly by parting politics. But ours is a close circle as we didn't surrender," Panlilio told the crowd.

Panlilio has been called a liar by former Belaman Rep. Willie de Villarama, a former supporter. Granny southern rallies have their jobs said the governor did not stick to his promise of employment.

But Gov. Jennifer Gutao and the governor had failed to name local officials and introduced long processes to the capitol.

The Sunday reunion was also filled with nostalgia.

Shirts, pins and hats worn in 2007, as well as old streamers, posters, flyers and manifestos, filled at least two tents. The campaign duties of 2007 played again, and while at least five now songs composed solely for this year's contest.

There's also a sense of pride in Ferdie Velasquez, a Panlilio supporter.

"Let's be more active this time so that the enemies are certain we are working for the good of the people," she said.

Others find strength in the allures of Panlilio with LP standard-bearer Sen. Benigno Aquino III and his running mate, Sen. Manuel Roxas II.

Find It. Believe It. Live it.

AdBoard celebrates 36 years of Self-Regulation

By Jho Gastanga

Advertising is a very powerful tool in delivering messages about products or services. It influences purchasing power.

In this fine and age, different forms of media and other creative devices are used to deliver these messages. Some may touch the heart; others are amusing while some provoke the senses. All these are intended to promote sales and increase product consumption. But like everything else, the freedom of expression, or in the case of advertising, the "commercial speech" must still be balanced with great sensitivity and responsibility towards society.

One example of concern is the Philippine industry amid the constant changes within this area of advertising is Self-Regulation, lives with the emergence of advanced technologies, new media and new rules of engagement, the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard) remains firm in its belief of upholding the cornerstone of its existence , which is consumer protection and industry development through self-regulation.

AdBoard and its policy of self-regulation

The AdBoard is the governing body composed of representatives of national organizations involved in the advertising practice, founded together to promote the development of the advertising industry through self-regulation, in harmony with industry goals it is the umbrella association of the advertising industry.

The AdBoard has been a staunch advocate of truthful and responsible advertising since its inception in 1974. It continues to foster a high degree of professionalism by developing an ethical code of standards that safeguard the welfare and interests of its members and the consumers at large. The AdBoard works closely with the government and other statutory organizations in monitoring legislations that might have a huge effect on the advertising industry and its constituents.

It serves the industry and the public as an effective dispute resolution body through its Trade Practices and Conduct Committee (TPCC), which is tasked to reinforce a standard norm of conduct within the industry and ensure that adherence to it is strictly implemented. Appropriate sanctions are also clearly outlined to violators of these standards.

In continuing to achieve its goal, a biennial advertising congress is sponsored by the AdBoard to promote development and greater innovation within the industry. The Philippine Advertising Congress is a vehicle for promoting fellowship a unity in the industry and a chance for practitioners to acquire relevant learnings in the field of marketing, creativity, new media and corporate social responsibility.

Finding its True Purpose

During the early years, diversity of its various sectors led the advertising industry to join together as a unified organization that would become the voice of Philippine advertising. Thus, the birth of the Philippine Board of Advertising which eventually became the AdBoard.

Finding the AdBoard's true purpose takes looking back to the core of its existence. Effective self-regulation is what the industry needs. Advertising is an industry where members recognize their pivotal role in stimulating a dynamic, prosperous and responsible industry. The AdBoard is an organization made by the industry for the industry and the consumers it serves.

In the context of the tremendous changes in society, consumer preferences are constantly shifting, hence methods in advertising continuously evolve. The AdBoard became more responsive and adaptive to these changes, paving the way to welcome new key players in the industry.

The AdBoard recently welcomed the Internet & Mobile Marketing Association of the Philippines (IMMAP) and the Media Specialists Association as new industry members. All the current member-associations, namely: Accredited Advertising Agencies Philippines (4As), Advertising Suppliers Association of the Philippines (ASAP), Cinema Advertising Association of the Philippines (CAAP), Independent Broadcasters Association of the Philippines (IBA), Marketing & Opinion Research Society of the Philippines (MORES), Outdoor Advertising Association of the Philippines (OAAP), Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA), United Print Media Group (UPMG), including IMMAP and MSAP - all agree that self-regulation is an important component in institutionalizing the industry.

Throughout its 36 years of existence, the AdBoard has been consistent in championing self-regulation. It is the force behind responsible and truthful advertising in the Philippines. The AdBoard and its member associations believe that self-regulation is a commitment to honest advertising and fair competition within the industry.

Believing in our Purpose

Certain issues have triggered qualms about AdBoard's mandate in upholding self-regulation within the advertising industry. There have been reasons which threatened the industry such as the withdrawal of BBI's membership and the assumption by a new body of AdBoard's governing functions. However, the members of the AdBoard are optimistic about these changes and see opportunities rather than threats.

The challenges have led the industry to become more galvanized and focus its resolve to move forward and all the more strengthen the organization by focusing on trade practices and other industry development projects. The natural competitiveness in a dynamic environment has proven the need for self-regulation to become more relevant than ever.

Through the consistent support and overwhelming conviction of all the member associations, the AdBoard has indeed survived the tests of time. Its foundation is still steady and its roots intact. The members believe that it is through self-regulation that the advertising industry could be best supervised.

Living the Purpose

In the coming years, other issues will be placed at the forefront of the industry. But challenges will make it stronger and braver. The desire the industry will be able to surmount the trials of the future by working together as one united industry with common goals.

INDUCTION OF THE 2010 OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

March 23, 2010 | Tuesday | 7:00 NN
Ballroom | 4 F | New World Hotel Makati City

Invocation
Mike Bantayan
Director
Philippine National Anthem
Marianne Hontiveros & Ensemble/Soloist of Soulmix
Recognition of Outgoing Officers & Board of Directors
Introduction of the Outgoing Officers & Board of Directors
Introduction of the Incoming Officers & Board of Directors
Introduction of the 2010 Officers & Board of Directors
Chairman's Message
Amado D. Valdez
Keynote Speech
Introduction of New Chief Ticket in Inducting Officers & Board Member
Executive Committee
Presentation of Plaque of Appreciation to
Induction of Officers
Closing Remarks
Master of Ceremonies

The members have overcome challenges with dedication and they will continue to do so through the years ahead. The whole can only be as good as the sum of its parts and the AdBoard will continue to flourish as long as there's camaraderie and harmony within the industry. Self-regulation will effectively work if the industry will continue to abide with their commitment to the consumers and as one nation it is self-regulation that will remain constant and economical for consumers.

The AdBoard a new focusing on trade concerns as an organization. It aims to come up with developmental projects that are both beneficial for the consumers and for the industry.

Trade practice and conduct in advertising is an important aspect that binds the industry together. Strict compliance to the rules of conduct within the industry is of paramount importance to preserve its stability and maintain an equally harmonious inter-association relationship.

The prevalence of new technologies makes the AdBoard more relevant than ever. With all the new players coming in it is high time for the AdBoard to reinforce the policy of self-regulation congruent to the needs of time. Sure, there'll be more challenges to come but it will never be a deterrent in ensuring good, clean advertising and the AdBoard will continue its advocacy in safeguarding the consumers' welfare, promote fair play and practice professional ethics.

The 2010 AdBoard is ready to find its real purpose, believe in its existence and live by its principles. for it is through unity that one can achieve victory.

PETRON
Get a free safety check-up
From March 1 to April 4, 2010 at participating Petron stations.

Clottey fight PPV take elates Manny

By Ray Cuarva

THE INQUIRER (PPV) BOYS FROM Manny Pacquiao's last fight against Antino Oliver are good enough for the Pinoy champ.

Pacquiao said he's "happy" with unofficial reports that his March 13 battle with the Ghanaian challenger held at the Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, drew a low estimate of 500,000 Stateside single-set views (SSSS) tabs.

Pacquiao said the PPV figures of 700,000 would have been "enough."

Interviewed by GMA-7 during his flight back to Manila from Los Angeles early yesterday, Pacquiao said "I'm [very] content" he compared with his last three megabuck bouts with American Oscar De La Hoya, Britain Ricky Hatton and Puerto Rican Miguel Cotto, which drew at least a million PPV buys each.

Pacquiao's eighth-round stoppage of De La Hoya earned 1.25 million PPV buys while his two-round demolition of Hatton conjured a million PPV according to HBO.

But it was his 12th-round knockout of Cotto which lifted Pacquiao to PPV supremo status. The fight had 1.4 buys worth $70 million.

Promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank said Pacquiao was the sole selling point of The Event.

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Air21 aims high with key additions

By Cedelff Tupas

AIR21 HOPES THAT 'BIG CHANGES,' from their team name to their lineup, will finally lead to a first title in the PBA Fiesta Conference.

With four new players, the 21 coach Yeng Guiao believes he now has all the tools to contend for a championship in the import-spiked tournament.

"I think the team has the necessary ingredients to contend for a championship," said Guiao yesterday at a press conference announcing the Lim franchise's return from the Burger King Whoppers to the Air21 Express.

"Our lineup has been upgraded. We have the talent, the determination and good chemistry," added Guiao, whose squad opens its campaign against San Miguel Beermen tonight at the Araneta Coliseum.

Guiao, buoyed by debuting import Aubrey Sweeny's 23 points and 16 rebounds, joined Jondan Salvador and Jay Washington in the 'W' column with a 97-86 thumping of Talk 'N' Text Sunday night.

The Express acquired Mike Cortez from San Miguel in exchange for Alex Cabagnot. After lobbying Sonny de Guzman and Reuben Rimado from Talk 'N' Text, the Express sent De Guzman to Globalport in a trade that sent Beau Belga, Allan Caidic and Dwight Ramos.

Air21 will have its import former Brigham Young University standout Keenan Bruning, a 6-foot-5 player whom Guiao described as an effective, high-percentage player.

Top female pug Albania gets a crack at Asiad gold

By Jose Marasco

FLYWEIGHT ANNIE ALBANIA, UNCLAIMED, leaped in her division in the last three boxing-star Asian Games, now gets a chance to win her pot-mates in the Asiad Games.

The rare opportunity came after women's boxing was belatedly included in the calendar of events of the 2010 Asiad set in Guangzhou, China, this November, IOC chief Jacques Rogge announced yesterday.

ALBANIA

Remarkably, said the Olympic Council of Asia and the Guangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee organizers'd pressed the inclusion of women's boxing with competitions in the flyweight, light-weight and middleweight divisions.

"This is a welcome development," he said. "We have a chance to win the gold with Albania."

Women's boxing will debut in the 2012 Olympiad with the same three classes.

Remasanta said the breakthrough was the result of persistent lobbying by Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines officials led by its president Ricky Vargas and executive director Ed Picson with the International Boxing Association (AIBA).

Remasanta said the 27 year-old Albania is admirable the country's best bet in the flyweight division.

Albania also won the gold in the 2009 Asian Indoor Games in Vietnam where Asia's best female boxers competed.

Red-hot Cavs seal sweep of Pistons

DETROIT'S Rasheed Wallace (clockwise) is fouled by Cleveland's Jamal Williams in Sunday's game in Cleveland.

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES AND MOMENTUM Shaquille Jackson scored 20 points in the decisive third quarter as Cleveland beat Detroit, 104-79, on Sunday to give the Cavaliers their first season sweep of the Pistons in 30 years.

Cleveland held a double-digit lead most of the game, although the Pistons cut it to 55-47 on a basket by Jonas Jerebko with 10 minutes left in the third quarter. Hickson and Parker took charge, combining to score 16 of Cleveland's next 19 points while Detroit went more than five minutes without a field goal.

Hickson finished with 13 points and eight rebounds. Parker had 12 points and Williams-Jones had 12 points and seven assists while sitting out the fourth quarter.

Cleveland has won 18 straight against Detroit, including last season's first-round sweep in the playoffs. Cleveland hadn't swept Detroit during a regular-season game since going 6-0 against the Pistons during the 1979-80 season.

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 26 of his 24 points during a dynamic second quarter as Los Angeles won Washington to its 11th straight loss, 99-92.

His closest had 28 points and 12 rebounds for the Lakers, who won their sixth straight after a three-game skid. The defending NBA champions had little trouble in the first three quarters, jumping to a 26-point halftime lead after successive quarters by Bryant.

(AP)

BOX SCORES: Game 1 (81 Jones 4-14 Jones 0-1, Saul Hayes 6-7 Jones 3-5, Tuanie 5-9, Gray 4-12 Jones 0-0, Bullock 3-8, Kibble 7-13

Ljubicic survives Roddick, bags Indian Wells crown

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—IVAN LJUBICIC beat Andy Roddick, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (5), to win the BNP Paribas Open on Sunday, finally claiming his first ATP Masters 1000 title after three losses in finals.

The 21 year-old Croatian will rise to second 11th to Monday's ATP Tour rankings, reversing to the top 20 for the first time in more than two years and recovering from a form slump last year when he lost in the first round in five consecutive tournaments.

"It was really a grind game," Ljubicic said. "I was fortunate enough to be more relaxed by the end." (AP)

Excelroof, Cobra duel for 2nd title slot today

By Jasmine N. Payo

EXCELROOF TIRE TO CERVAN TIU Ying Tuvera Pride's backcourt threat when the two teams battle for the remaining championship berth in the Hil. PG Pres. Ferrer Planters Cup today.

"We have to play solid team defense," said Excelroof coach Ato Agustin. "Their shooters [Paul] Lee, [Patrick] Cabahug and [Jay] Reyes spark their offense. If we stop them, we have a good chance of winning."

GAME TODAY
(San Juan Gym gym)
1 p.m. — Excelroof vs Cobra Energy Drink

Game time at 5 p.m. at the San Juan Gym.

Agustin's 25ers forged the seven-take-all duel after squeezing the lone seat, the No. 2 seed in the semifinals, with an 89-81 decision last Saturday.

Phoenix Fi Complex earlier lived up to its top-ranked status by drubbing Concrete Rise, 99-83, to claim the first title berth.

The best-of-three championship series starts on Thursday at the JSGC Flying V arena in San Juan.

Jhobo Aquino, Rumbay Bajenaldo, Ian Sangalang and Calvin Abueva, the key players in Aquino's 2009 NCAA title run with San Sebastian, fueled the 25ers' 16-point second half to overcome Phoenix and spoiled Lee's league high 29 points.

Cobra coach Lawrence Chongson said the match will boil down to who seizes it's owner. "I just hope the players' refusal to lose and their pride to help the team will be there."

Pacman sweeter the second time around

BARE EYE

Ricardo Fernández

(MALETO: JUAN ARELLANO, 66, WILL BE laid to rest today at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani in Taguig City after ceremonies including the gentleman and soldier who spent his life serving the country. Born in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Arellano finished his primary and elementary schooling at the St. Ignatius Chapel in Camp Crame. Gift of with quiet guys and diplomats, Jimmy Arellano always had something else to say about others. His grandchildren, Nicole and Jacob Fernández, request prayers for the peaceful rest of their beloved Lolong.)

* * *

AFTER SUFFERING THROUGH JUDGES Christy, the net-market-crazed men wanted to know if Floyd Mayweather Jr. would fight hard and press before than the Big Bare Bear Chavez.

They wonder: Can Mayweather, who's fast but is not really a big puncher like Pacquiao, be able to stand up to the fabulous fury of the Pacific Thrill?

Pacquiao himself no longer sounded keen for an answer.

"I came this far to my career without him—there's no need to call him out," the Los Angeles Times yesterday quoted Pacquiao as saying.

* * *

The LA Times likewise noted Pacquiao's certainty that his 'reserve will not be overpromised if he doesn't fight Mayweather."

Pacquiao did not have to explain.

He has nothing more left to prove inside the ring.

"They were dancing to different tempos, stalling your against sticky walls."

How did you finally swing it?

"Gue awoke to Dasmas, simulok labor, he gave everything he could. It fit fling."

* * *

Tim seems he fell wholly to the promise of another knockout.

Well, it was not exactly a case of admission—it love getting louder the second time around.

But, just like many other Pinoy fans who believed to have a second look at the bout, Tim said he got merely wounded with a good, relevant show.

Of course, not all fans out there took a second helping in order to savor it.

* * *

"It was to me a complete event, but at random," explained civic leader Randy Chavez, chief executive officer at Watsons, an industry leader.

Chavez, a keen student of boxing, said the ultimate test Pacquiao took and passed completed his admission for the boxing superhero.

He hasn't he was able to show how great he is even without scoring a knockout," agreed Jeff Clemente of Manila Phillips, who takes pride in the fact that Pacquiao started out and won his first big title—the Orient Pacific Bantamweight crown—in his native Mandaluyong.

Lacuna seizes 3rd gold in Singapore

JESSIE LACUNA SWAMPED HIS third gold while Jasmine Al-Bisher's pre-dawn race means Philippine records Tuesday night at the close of the Singapore National aquagroup swimming championships.

Lacuna, who earlier ruled the boys' 100-meter and 200m free-style, added the 200m butterfly to his gold collection at the expense of two Japanese, clocking 2 minutes 03.01 seconds.

One of the major discoveries of the Philippine Olympic Festival two years ago, the 16-year-old ranker from Bulacan earlier supplanted a new BP record in the 100m free 11:50.98, eclipsing Miguel Molina's 1:51.75.

Al-Bisher, 14, smashed the 10 marks of 18-Asa swimmer Ahmed Sirene (19:19) set in the Beijing Olympics while bearing the South Olympic Games qualifying time of 17:12 to the girls' 14m free.

Al-Bisher also earned a third bronze in the 50m free in 26.50, beating her old BP mark of 26.60 set in the 2009 Manila SEA Games.

The BP Yankees also finished with a silver and seven bronzes with Banjo Banjo's third-place finish in the 200m breaststroke (2:21.35) capping a big showing by the Filipinos. —Jane Manaloto

Win caps Gilas' tour

THE SMART GILAS PILIPINAS five ended its Australian Tour undefeated after conquering the Sydney City Comets, 81-73, Sunday night in Sydney.

The Nationals were all but one of their six games Down Under with the 7'3-all standoff against Australia's second national team supporting as the only blemish in their 11-day sojourn.

Gilas crushed New South Wales Institute of Sports, 82-63, and walloped the Canberra Gunners, 101-84, after bowing Australia's second team in their first game, 89-84, in the first of two consecutive U-20 tests, 78-76.

Coach Rajko Toroman said the team will next before travelling to Serbia on Sunday.

"We hope to keep on improving with the Serbian trip," said former Gilas team manager Rhenzo Cano.

The summer training serves in preparation for the Fiba Asia Championship Cup to May. —Jane Manaloto

100 fights spice up LGBA 5-cocker at Big Dome

THE BIG GUNS OF THE LEON BARANGUER ASSOCIATION (LGBA) plant his anticipated 4-or-5 cock derby featuring more than 100 fights at the Araneta Coliseum.

Headlining the list of hitmen are Sonny Lagos, Bert Manio, Mayor Dindo Barrio, Jess Tarnate, Jun Sevilla, LGBA president Reno "Boy" Diaz, Dr. Jaime and Ed Ridaja, Ruby Cuenca, Bobby del Rosario, Joel Fernando, Gil Nicolas, Mike Rivadulla, Louie Zamora and Jose Bautista.

LGBA's first 5-cock event for 2010 last Thursday produced a solo champ in Aaron Cacho of Pangasinan (AC Bolinao) who posted a perfect five wins.

Julaton eyes third ...

From page B-18

said Julaton, a former WBO and IBA super bantamweight champion.

Julaton is said they will use Arboleda's speed in hopes of bringing down the veteran Barrion, who enters the fight with a 36-4-3 (20).

"Herman is strong," said Domingo, sounding confident of his ward's chances against the 39-year-old Cavadhon.

Domingo spoke highly of Julaton, whom he called "Dynamite" because "he knows how to do everything and he's not afraid to do."

Meanwhile, Arboleda (20-0-1, 7 ko) will see Julaton's fight starting at 5 p.m. Sunday.

TOUGHEN COURSE Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) executive director Rich Reyes highlights the race orientation for the 2010 Subic Bay International Triathlon on TRAP-ABF administrator Leonard C. Arroza (second right), deputy administrator Raul Mercado (left) and TRAP president Tom Carrasco. The May 1-2 event will be held in conjunction with the 2010 Asian Juniors and U-23 Championships sanctioned by the International Triathlon Union and Asian Triathlon Confederation.

NCA derby fires off at Ynares

THE CREAM OF THE COUNTRY'S crop of gamefowl breeders and cockfighters are action today in the National Cockers Alliance (NCA) derby at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

The derby, hosted by Hon. Cardee JV Hagonoy and Buel Bicaldo, is sponsored by Inquirer Cockpress.

The top contenders for this year's NCA Cocker of the Year race—Danny Glen Cruz, Jun Asuncion, Tony Estrada, Elmer Negrencruz, James Uy and Marlo Salazar, Ernie Sandia, and Rene Medina—are fielding their best fighters in today's derby.

Cruz will be represented by fighters Jun Asuncion, Tony Estrada, Elmer Negrencruz, James Uy and Marlo Salazar, Ernie Sandia, and Rene Medina—are fielding their best fighters in today's derby.

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Furyk pips Choi, ends long victory drought

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA—JIM FURYK HELD A TWO-UNDERPAR 70 lead after closing one shot at the Transitions Championship and capture his first PGA Tour win in three years. Furyk finished at 277 to prevail for the 14th time in his career. South Korean Choi Kyung-Ju finished with Furyk through seven holes until a two-shot swing on the par-three eighth. Choi closed with a 72. Furyk was on the 18th hole when Tiger Woods was sighted on his first on-camera interview since the car crash. AFP

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Eight-NBCD Bustamante takes a shot as No. 9 in Sunday's finals clash with Biata Reyes.

Django tops Japan Open

Upends pal Reyes in finals

FRANCISCO "DJANGO" BUSTAMANTE UPENDED POOL PARTNER HYDEN "Sister" Reyes, 9-7, in an all-Filipino finals to pair away his second Japan 9-Ball Open championship in Tokyo on Sunday.

But it was a victory the former world No. 1 Bustamante admittedly will not cherish, not one against a close buddy. Proof: Djan's insistence and co-winner of unprecedented two World Cup of Pool doubles titles.

Bustamante, who later conquered Jeffrey de Luna in the semifinals to earn the right to face his legendary kumpadre in the race-to-9 finals, pocketed the champion's purse of 1.5 million yen (about P750,000).

Reyes downed Japanese veteran Toru Kuribayashi in the final from 10e seeded for $100,000 yen.

Bustamante also won the 2002 edition of the tournament, which drew about 400 of the world's finest cue masters this time.

"It's always hard to play against Hyden anywhere," said Bustamante in Filipino. "We don't cherish matches like the (Japan Open) finals because we always compete together overseas."

Except for the 2003 and 2004 tournaments, Filipinos have dominated the annual five-star tournament.

Antonio Lining won the Japan Open back-to-back from 2000, with Alex Pagulayan emerging his class in 2007. Dennis Orcollo prevailed in 2008 before Rubilen Gallego came from nowhere to nail the title last year.

Bustamante actually made it two major titles in a row in Japan. In November, he downed Lining, 11-7, to conclude all-Filipino finals to win the 2009 All Japan 9-Ball Championship in Amagasaki-shi, Hyogo, and bank about 1.4 million yen.

George Lloaren, Correspondent

MMA Julaton shook Lisa "Bad News" Brown.

Julaton eyes third world title Sunday

By Cedelf P. Tupas

TWO-TIME WORLD CHAMPION MMA "The Hurricane" Julaton faces her toughest battle yet when she takes on Canada's Lisa "Bad News" Brown for the WMA women's super bantamweight title this Saturday (Sunday in Manila) at the Casino Pama in Ontario, Canada.

The San Francisco-based Julaton, a Filipino-American, who traces her roots to Bacnotan, is looking to become the undisputed champion in her weight class against Brown, a southpaw, who is undefeated in her nine fights.

It is coincidence with opponent at the GMA Network Center, Julaton said she is on track in her preparations for the fight, which she needs to win and beat her claim as the top pound-for-pound female pug in the world.

"I know it's going to be a hard fight but my conditioning is great and I'm feeling strong," said Julaton, who trains under Nonito Donaire Sr., the father of WBA interim super flyweight champ Nonito Jr.

"It's a great honor to be supported by Filipinos, I feel very blessed," added Julaton, who holds a 6-1-1 record.

Julaton did not make any predictions.

"I just have to follow the game plan," JULATON, P. 17

RP street booters finish with flourish

SHOWING REMARKABLE RESILIENCY, THE Philippines came from behind to nip host South Africa, 3-1, in extra time Sunday night to capture the 1st Dikatso Street Child World Cup Shield in Durban, South Africa.

Mario Titay scored all the goals for the Filipinos, who ended the tournament with three straight victories after dropping their first two matches to wind up in the round-robin final.

Bella crossed Tuscania, 3-0, to win the maiden edition of the tournament aimed to clean up interest for the FIFA World Cup, which South Africa is hosting in June, and put focus on the plight of the world's street children.

Titay equalized in the 11th minute of the first half, after brilliantly linking up with Gerald Pinzon. He then scored on a header off a Pinzon corner kick for the game-winner.

The Filipinos, backed by Angas Lauren Memorial Trust, notched their first win over Ghana, 3-0, then overwhelmed their counterparts from Iceland superpower Brazil, 6-2.

Cedelf P. Tupas

Aplus METRO
Editor: Alejandro B. Lllanilla

DID YOU KNOW

UN OUT OF 10 cases of sexual violence against married Filipino women are committed by their current husbands or partners. (Ayni, Jimakwela, Inquirer Research)

Muntinlupa mayor charged with graft

Complainants claim San Pedro used public funds to send DepEd execs to HK

By Miko Morales

MUNTINLUPA MAYOR ALDRIN SAN PEDRO WAS charged with graft yesterday before the Office of the Ombudsman for allegedly using public funds to send 32 city schools and Department of Education (DepEd) officials and seven government workers on a trip to Hong Kong in January.

The complainants—Councilor Allen Intapan and Aurelius Argana—who were represented by their lawyer, Harry Roque, accused San Pedro of using his office and the city's coffers to turn school officials "from non-political civil servants into disposers or peddlers of undue patronage."

Antapan is running for reelection under the ticket of Liberal Party mayoral bet Jaime Fresnedi—but Bistro's predecessor—while Argana identified himself as a resident of the city.

"We accuse Mayor San Pedro of persuading, inducing and influencing these Muntinlupa DepEd Officials to violate the ethical standards of professional conduct," Antapan and Argana said in their 12-page complaint.

They added, "We also accuse Mayor San Pedro of using government resources and illegal powers of his public office in an inefficient, ineffective and economically unsound manner for a questionable ... trip to Hong Kong, resulting [in the wasting] of very limited public funds and resources of Muntinlupa City."

The complainants said that 32 DepEd Muntinlupa officials went with San Pedro to Hong Kong from Jan. 28 to 30 based on a flight manifest.

The DepEd officials included division superintendent, coordinators and principals of public schools in the city who, according to Antapan and Argana, were given permission by Education Secretary Jesli Lapus to go on the trip "on the condition that no government funds should be used for the purpose and that their travel should not adversely affect the services in the school."

The complainants said that San Pedro "accompanied, encouraged, facilitated and led the ... Muntinlupa DepEd officials in traveling to Hong Kong," along with seven city hall officials.

The officials were identified in the complaint as city administrator Roberto Benipi and public employment service officer in charge Myrna Dollesin. Also named were Rosalie Abitar, Jojo Ubasania and Christian Santos, all assigned at the mayor's office.

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BMW EfficientDynamics

Binay tags political rival in Cainta shooting

By Nikko Calleja and DJ Yap

SAYING THE ATTACK ON HIS senior adviser was an "act of desperate persons," the camp of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay pointed out early they had provided the police with "credible information" that could help them identify the masterminds.

"We have provided all the information that we possess and the police [are] leading into the events that transpired prior to the attempt," Binay said in a statement.

In a phone interview, the mayor did not elaborate on what he had told the police. He only said that he was certain that a politician from Makati who was a rival of his son, Senator Erwin Tieng Jr., was behind the shooting.

"Based on the facts that we have, local politics was the main motive in the ambush," the elder Binay said.

However, he refused to identify the politician.

Ernesto Lindingan, 48, was shot by motorcycle-riding men on Sunday in Cainta while on his way home from a golf game.

He was taken to the Medical City in Ortigas, Pasig where he was still being treated for gunshot wounds on his right leg and left wrist.

Lindingan is Binay's senior adviser and a godfather to Binay Jr. who is running for mayor in the May 10 elections.

Binay said the attack which was aimed at threatening him and his children would only encourage his family to go on with their respective campaigns.

"Violence is the first resort of those who are desperate. They are the first resort of those cannot stand honest discussion, of those who cannot articulate a cohesive and credible program of government," said the mayor, who is running for vice president alongside former President Joseph Estrada.

Binay's rivals for the top seat post include his father's longtime ally Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado; Erwin Soriano, son of Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. chair Efraim Genuino and former senator and magnate Jose Antonio Pablo Cojuangco Jr.

Binay and Mercado parted ways when the latter decided to field his son for mayor in the coming elections.

Meanwhile, the Cainta police said they were facing a bleak trail in their probe of the ambush on Lindingan as the victim's family was not cooperating with investigators.

"Nobody cooperated with us. Nobody is willing to give us a statement," said Chief Insp. Tomas Sanchez, Cainta police chief.

He said police investigators who tried to talk to the victim were told by the head nurse that the family had instructed them that they would be giving an interview to no one.

He added that Lindingan's statement was crucial to the investigators especially in determining the motive for the attempted slay. "We want to know the example, if it has [something] to do with politics or if business rivalry could be a matter," Sanchez said.

He said no witnesses had turned up yet to identify the men who shot Lindingan.

"Although the area was highly populated, the motorist happened at night so no one was deemed," Sanchez said.

He added that Binay had not been in touch with investigators and that he even tried to contact the Makati police to share information on the case but had not gotten a reply.

METRO BRIEFS

Fire destroys 4 houses in Makati City

A TWO-HOUR fire believed to have been caused by faulty electrical wiring razed four houses in a compound in Makati City and destroyed P1 million worth of property on Sunday night. Chief Insp. Samuel Tadeo, head of the city's Bureau of Fire, said the fire started at around 10:00 p.m. in a two-story condominium on Sgt. Felipe Salvo Street in Barangay Olympia. Some structures were being rented by Manuel Aguilar. The blaze immediately spread to three houses which were made of light materials. Residents who were interviewed by arson investigators said Aguilar was not at home when the fire began. It was put out at 12:40 a.m. and no one was reported hurt or killed.

Nikko Calleja

Up to court to order Ivler's release, says doctor

THE QUIRINO Memorial Medical Center (QMMC) has left it to a Quezon City court to decide whether or not road rage suspect Jason Ivler should be discharged and transferred to a detention cell. In a letter to Ivler's lawyers, a copy of which was sent to Judge Maximiliano Asuncion of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 15, the QMMC maintained that Ivler was "an accused in a case involving a non-bailable offense" and that he was "under the court's jurisdiction." "If and when this court orders us to release your client, we will readily [obey]," Dr. Fernando Abesamis of the QMMC said in a letter to Ivler's lawyers dated March 10. Abesamis's letter was in response to a letter sent by Ivler's lawyers—Lawrence Guy, Priscilla Mam-Mamelin and Anthony Leonard Tuazon—dated March 5 which told the court "that recommending any measure that would diminish the health and safety of the accused [Ivler] before his full recovery may render you vulnerable to criminal and civil liability."

Julie M. Aurelio

DOJ upholds resolution dismissing case vs Failon

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) has junked an appeal by police officials to reverse an earlier resolution which dismissed the obstruction of justice charges filed against broadcaster Ted Failon and some household members.

In a resolution promulgated, then Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera dismissed the motion for reconsideration filed by the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) which sought to overrule a ruling by the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

"We have carefully evaluated the arguments advanced by the complainants in their motion for reconsideration and (has) not find that the same have been adequately considered and properly refuted by the movant-respondent," Devanadera said.

A copy of the DOJ resolution was forwarded to city prosecutor's office on March 10.

"Finding no cogent reason to disturb the earlier resolution, which is hereby affirmed, the motion to deny the motion for reconsideration," the resolution said as it added that the DOJ would no longer entertain any motion or pleading on the issue.

In May 2009, the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office dismissed the **arrest of junior complaint against** Fabio Ohino Boobon Hong Ji-nal [sic] and five other people, including his driver and house helper, for lack of probable cause.

The charges were filed by QCPD police officer Rolen Paragsa, allegedly failed to report the shooting of his wife, Kristine Hong, on April 15, 2009, and his house help cleaned up the bathroom where her body had been found.

The Criminal Bureau of Investigation had concluded that Failon's wife had killed herself.

Julie M. Aurelio

CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE SCALY KIND

Jason and Arsenio, who are both visually impaired, "see" a baby crocodile with their hands at the Manila Zoo. They were among 20 children who joined a zoo attendant's workshop for blind children at the zoo with the help of non-government organization Resources for the Blind and Parent Advocates for the Visually Impaired Children.

JOY NACIO

Lawyer claims Buan's arrest a sham

By DJ Yap

A COUNSEL OF DENNIS Manalabayang mayoral candidate Hector Albert Buan suggested in court yesterday that there had been no drug bust operation at all and that Buan's supposed counterconnection with undercover operatives in January could be a "sham."

Lawyer Marlon Ulanday also implied that the confidential informant who tipped the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) about Buan's alleged drug trade—and who served as a witness for the prosecution—was in cahoots with the agents to involve Buan in exchange for being relieved on a house arrest.

Ulanday tried to establish the theory during his cross-examination of Jojo Bautista, a prosecution witness, PDEA Intelligence Officer 2 Randy Paragas, before Judge Abraham Borreros of the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 159.

The scene is bearing a déjà vu for had filed by Buan who stands accused of violating Sections 5 and 11 of Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, a non-bailable case.

Paragas testified on his participation during the arresting operation by which he stood guard inside silent but nonsmart in Tondo. as the agents arrested Buan inside his car after the alleged transaction on Jan. 20.

During his cross examination, Buan's counsel Paragas why he had requested the use of a white Nissan Navarra for the operation, considering that the vehicle had been confiscated in another drug bust in Taguig City the day before.

Paragas said that the agency allowance had denied his request and that he had done so only because he wanted to use two vehicles for his seven-unit team.

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The scene is bearing a déjà vu for the confidential informant was actually the owner of the Innova who was released later that day on a drug possession charge. Paragas denied it.

Ulanday insinuated that the confidential informant had entered into a deal with PDEA to involve Buan and other personalities in exchange for being charged with a lesser, bailable offense, instead of the drug pushing charges he had originally been arrested for.

But Chavez's line of questioning was cut short when Prosecutor Luther Vergara objected and Borreros pointed out that the defense would not develop its evidence during cross-examination.

The court told the defense lawyer that he had plenty of opportunity to present their evidence.

Muntinlupa ...

From page A 17

fire, and Ilocos Orang and Ifugao, who serve as councilmen in Intramuros.

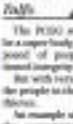
"It is not coincidence that a resolution like Mayor Jun Perdon would be giving a Subanen grande (grand vacation)" in Muntinlupa, Bagtikan said, while who will be sending the list the May 10 elections [and] who are also done-ins as members of the COMELEC (Board of Election Inspectors) in the 2007," the complainant said.

Bagtikan continued, Jun Perdon dismissed the complaint as "politically motivated" considering that the campaign period for local positions are to start on October.

"The motives of the alleged complainants as members considering who is seeking re-election, are already suspect considering because its timing," he said in a statement. "I suspect that it is politically motivated and, at the very least, intended to [let him] gain political mileage ... or try exposure."

San Pedro denied using public funds for the trip and said he would need to read a copy of the complaint first before endorsing further on the issue.

PCGG, a den of thieves



ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

WHEN A PERSON GOES around town saying he is honest when nobody questions his integrity chances are he's a thief.

President Aquino's constant statement—100 percent, is fact—that she will step down when her term expires is suspicious.

When a person is too defensive over something, there's a reason to suspect him or her.

Especially if that person happens to be Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

* * *

When GMA says she will do something, she means exactly the opposite.

When she promised she would not run in the 2004 presidential election because it would "create divisiveness" in the country, what did she do?

She ran, more, she allegedly even cheated in that election.

* * *

When President Cory took over from Marcos in 1986, she created the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to guard the huge wealth—supposedly stolen—that the Marcoses left behind.

The agency should have been dismantled a long time ago.

* * *

Cassie Ong Ethnos "Ayong" Maliksi used to court rebel Interior Secretary Ronnie Puno and National Police Chief Jesse Versoza didn't seek his approval in appointing the new police chief in Bacoor.

Under the law, the governor or mayor has the right to choose his provincial or city/town's police chief.

Maliksi was just asserting his right to choose his own police chief.

The Cavite Regional Trial Court ruled in favor of Maliksi and ordered the reinstatement of Senior Supt. Alfred Nollo Corpus as Cavite PNP director.

But Puno and Versoza have appealed the decision of the court order.

The new provincial director, Senior Supt. Primitivo Tabajonda, shunned his detractors of Maliksi by setting up a checkpoint right in front of the governor's house in Imus.

LGUs subordinates know that their big boss holds the Supreme Court by the neck so why should they obey a pipsqueak order from a lower court?

Pope's letter does little to assuage Irish anger

DUBLIN—POPE BENEDICT XVI's weekend apology to victims of sexual abuse at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland met with a deeply skeptical and often angry response from many Catholics here on Sunday, with some arguing that the pontiff's letter was ineffectual and demanding that the Pope forcibly remove the head of the Irish Church if he does not resign.

In the apology, a pastoral letter read aloud at all weekend Masses across the 26 Catholic dioceses spread across the Irish republic and the six British-ruled counties of the north, and handed out in printed form to thousands of churchgoers, Benedict expressed "shame and sorrow" to victims and their families for what he called "fearful and criminal" acts committed by members of the clergy.

But in the apology, issued on Saturday, the Pope did not require that Cardinal Sean Brady, who is the head of the Irish Church—or any other Church leaders—be disciplined for their mistakes, as some victims had hoped. Nor did he clearly what critics in Ireland and elsewhere have said are reasonable, very obvious rules about the procedures for investigating abuse cases within the Church and Church leaders' responsibility to inform civil authorities about offenses they uncover, a duty the Pope reiterated strongly in his letter.

By remaining silent on the issue of punishment for top Church figures implicated in the scandals in Ireland, have described as decades of cover-up, the pastoral letter appeared to have done little to assuage the dismay and anger of many in Ireland at years of revelations about pedophile priests and child-rapers. While Benedict called for forgiveness, the initial response among worshippers and newsstand-hoppers alike was that there will be no healing until at least some prominent Church leaders resign.

Many attending Mass over the weekend at St. Mary's Pro Cathedral, the center of worship for the Dublin archdiocese, as well as others interviewed as they shopped in the spring sunshine in the Georgian heart of the city around St. Stephen's Green, said they shared the victims' anger about the clerical scandals and scorn for his bishops.

"I feel let down," said Hugh Keogh, 62, a Dublin businessman interviewed. "It is more wounded on top of another. I do not think we have seen the last of this." AFP

Sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic Church

HERE ARE SOME OF THE SEXUAL abuse scandals in various countries:

* SWITZERLAND: The Swiss Catholic Church is investigating allegations of abuse by clergy. The Diocese of Chur, in eastern Switzerland, said on Saturday it was investigating around 10 complaints. The abbot of a monastery in the diocese said at least three of the 77 monks at Einsiedeln had committed acts of abuse since he took office in December 2001, but no legal action had been taken.

Last week, a priest resigned from his post as a parish church in Chur diocese after admitting abusing a child 40 years ago when he worked in a different country.

* NETHERLANDS: More than 200 Catholics have reported abuse after Radio Netherlands Worldwide and newspaper NRC Handelsblad revealed that three priests from the Salesian order abused pupils decades ago at a boarding school. The Church there has set up an independent inquiry headed by a Protestant politician.

* GERMANY: A Jesuit high school in Berlin reported cases of sexual abuse there to the police, Benedict's brother Georg Ratzinger admitted to slapping boys to discipline them but denied knowledge of sexual abuse. The ensuing wave of abuse charges from previously silent victims has since reached almost 200.

Archbishop Robert Zollitsch, head of the German Bishops Conference, apologized in February for sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests. His archdiocese confirmed reports he had been involved in disciplining an abusive priest without reporting this to civil authorities.

* BELGIUM: In April 2002, Bishop Brandon Castaneda of Fresno resigned over his handling of charges against a priest who committed suicide in 1999 while facing 66 charges of abuse.

May 2009 - The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse issued a five-volume report that took nine years to compile. It said priests beat and raped children during decades of abuse in Catholic-run institutions.

Nov. 2009 - The Murphy report, a government-commissioned inquiry into abuse in Dublin from 1975 to 2004, said Church authorities covered up widespread cases of child sexual abuse until the mid-1990s.

Dec. 2009 - After meeting two Irish Church leaders, Benedict said he shared the "outrage, betrayal and shame" over the scandal in Ireland.

Feb. 2010 - Benedict held crisis talks with 24 Irish bishops at the Vatican. The bishops promised him they were committed to cooperating with authorities, four bishops have offered their resignations and the Pope has so far accepted one.

March 2010 - Pope Benedict apologized to victims of child sex abuse by Irish clergy, saying he felt "shame and remorse."

* UNITED STATES: June 2002 - The US Conference of Catholic Bishops agreed on a new policy that would forbid pedophile priests from ever again acting as clerics—but not necessarily expel them from the priesthood.

Dec. 2002 - Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law resigned over charges he transferred clerical abusers to other parishes to cover up the scandal.

Feb. 2004 - Independent researchers commissioned by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops said 10,667 people accused US priests of child sexual abuse from 1950 to 2003. More than 17 percent of accusers had siblings who were also abused. Reuters

Thousands call for immigration reform in US

WASHINGTON—TENS OF THOUSANDS of immigrants and activists rallied here on Sunday, calling for legislation this year to give legal status to millions of illegal immigrants and seeking to pressure President Barack Obama to keep working on the controversial issue even the health-care debate is behind him.

Demonstrators filled five lengthy blocks of the Washington Mall, down the hill from the Capitol. The immigrant activists, cheering Obama's campaign slogan of "Yes we can!" in Spanish and English, aired their gripe with their chosen foe politics and media attention mainly focused on the health care events in the House of Representatives.

The rally brought the system to major street action by immigration activists, who accuse the hundreds of thousands of prosecutions in marches and raids in 2006. What an immigration overhaul measure was defeated in Congress in 2007, the pace of enforcement raids picked up and many immigrants, especially those without legal status, preferred to lay low.

But immigrant advocates decided to gamble by calling the crowds, to give a dozen of keys that might interest Obama and also to stress the frustration of many immigrants who have taken to heart his repeated promises that he would move an immigration bill in Congress by early this year.

Obama addressed the crowd via a videotaped message displayed on huge screens, promising to keep working on the issue but avoiding a specific time frame. AFP

PEOPLE urging immigration reform fill the National Mall in Washington on March 21. AP

US-Russia deal on nuke arms nearly complete

PRAGUE—HEADED A YEAR AFTER PRESIDENT Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev ordered negotiators to work on a new treaty to reduce their nuclear arsenals, the two countries say they are finally close to completing a deal.

A deal—a small but important step toward Obama's goal of a nuclear-arms-free world—could build momentum and trust around resolving other key nuclear issues. They range from how to pressure Iran and North Korea to abandon their nuclear ambitions to reducing the number of tactical nuclear weapons that are so unpopular in Europe. It could also set a positive tone for a key conference on nuclear nonproliferation this spring.

On another level, it would bolster Obama's credibility overseas, which has been undermined by his disappointing Copenhagen climate change conference, ongoing terrorist missteps, faltering Middle East peace efforts and growing skepticism about last year's Prague speech in which he promised to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

"It's important to show the Prague speech was not just rhetoric," Black Prince patrick, senior fellow for nonproliferation at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, said.

An agreement would end a drought in disarmament seconds between the United States and Russia, which were a hallmark of the Cold War years and were negotiated even during the worst periods of tension between them. AP

Sarkozy takes drubbing in French regional poll

PARIS—PRESIDENT NICOLAS Sarkozy's party took a severe drubbing from French voters on Sunday in nationwide regional elections that were his last big national test before he seeks reelection in 2012.

As polling stations closed, initial estimates gave Socialist and opposition electoral alliances some 54 percent of the vote, Sarkozy's right-wing UMP 36 percent and the far-right National Front just under nine percent.

"Tonight's result confirms the success of the left's lists. We have not been overdoing," admitted UMP Deputy Secretary General Frédéric Lefebvre, who had 29 of his ministers entering the contenders in the race.

"This is a disappointment for the governing party. I take my share of responsibility, and tomorrow morning, I'll take this up with the president," Before the vote, a report in the pro-government daily Le Figaro said Prime Minister Fillon would offer his government's resignation on Monday but that Sarkozy would ask him to form a new, slightly modified Cabinet.

If confirmed, the estimates—based on samples of cast ballots by polling agencies—mean Sarkozy's supporters in control of only one of France's 22 mainland regions, their right-wing stronghold Alsace.

Meanwhile, the left, dominated by the Socialist Party, appeared to have held onto the mainland, the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe and French Guyana and to have won a tight race to wrest Corsica from the UMP.

The UMP's sole consolation was to take the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, in a vote to elect the regional councils that are in charge of transport, education and cultural policy.

"The French have expressed their opposition to the politics of the president and the government," Socialist party leader Martine Aubry said, calling on the left to unite behind a program to retake power at a national level.

Turnout was low, although around four percent higher than in last week's first round. Polling agencies TNS-Sofres and OpinionWay apparently predicted that the second-round abstention rate would be 49 percent.

Last week's first-round vote saw the French leader's right-wing supporters win their lowest share of the vote in more than three decades. The party's final score was higher but still low enough to constitute a stark defeat.

While the left already controlled 20 of the 22 regions before the vote, the margin of its victories underlined its advance. In regions of Petite Charente and Midi-Pyrenees, the Socialist lists won more than 40 percent.

Sarkozy, who still has a considerable majority in the national parliament, has insisted that the regional poll is not a verdict on central government, but he is expected to order a reshuffle in the next few days.

The result was another blow to a president whose personal approval ratings are at an all-time low and will likely increase pressure within his own party for a change of direction. AFP

SARKOZY casts his ballot during the second round of the election. AFP

Hong Kong air pollution hits record levels

HONG KONG—HONG KONG'S AIR pollution soared to record levels on Monday. The Environmental Protection Department said, warning that a toxic stew enveloping the city was a danger to the public.

The government agency said it found Air Pollution Index (API) readings that in several cases were more than double the level at which it advises the general public to stay indoors.

"Today's API is at record high levels," an agency spokesperson said.

Hong Kong's pollution is worse and harbor is often shrouded in a blanket of haze which has been criticized as a public health disaster and blamed for driving some expatriates away from the international business hub.

The API is a score based on the concentrations of pollutants in the air, including sulfur dioxide and lead, with a higher reading indicating an increased danger to the public.

In July 2008, the city's environmental agency recorded air pollution levels as high as 202, until before Monday's record. Readings of 100 or higher are considered "very high" or "severe" level," it said on its website.

Authorities often blame deteriorating air quality on emissions from the southern Chinese factory belt over Hong Kong's northern borders.

But a study by the Civil Exchange think tank last year said that Hong Kong's own road emissions were the dominant source of air pollution in the densely populated city of seven million. AFP

Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program

SOURCES SOUGHT

The Louis Berger Group, Inc. (LBGI), the U.S. firm contracted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement the Job Enabling English Proficiency (JEEP) Project of the Growth with Equity in Mindanao 3 (GEM-3) Program, is inviting interested suppliers to express their interest and submit quotations relative to the supply and delivery of various books published by Cambridge Press and Oxford University Press. Suppliers must also demonstrate in their submission that they have the capacity to supply and deliver the required books. For more details, visit our website http://www.mindanao.org/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=388.

Deadline for the receipt of submissions is on **March 31, 2010, 3:00PM** at the office of the Contracts Manager, GEM Program, Damosa Business Center, Anglongto Avenue, Lanang, Davao City. Contact person for this solicitation is Edselle Evangelio, Procurement Specialist; email address: eevangelio@mindanao.org; phone number (082) 334-7720 local 211.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Olanio

Last year, 10 million Filipinos in 647 cities and towns switched off their lights.

We were #1 in the world
Will that happen again this year?

Log on to www.earthhour.org and be counted

4
DAYS
'till the lights go out!
March 27, 2010
8:30PM - 9:30PM

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SWITCH

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US Congress passes historic health care overhaul measure

WASHINGTON—THE US Congress passed a historic health care overhaul on Sunday, handing President Barack Obama a landmark win and taking the United States closer than ever to guaranteed coverage for all Americans.

The Democratic-held House of Representatives voted 219-212 to approve a Senate-passed bill aimed at extending coverage to 32 million Americans who currently lack it in the most sweeping social-policy shift in four decades.

"Tonight, we answered the call of history as so many Americans have before us. We did not avoid our responsibility, we embraced it. We did not fear our future, we shaped it," Obama said in brief remarks shortly after the vote.

Obama, who was expected to sign the bill into law within days, praised lawmakers for defying the predictions of pundits that the mammoth bill was collapse in the face of political setbacks and unyielding partisan rifts.

Tired after a week in which he was to spoke to nearly 100 lawmakers, but evidently savoring a hard-fought triumph on his top domestic goal, Obama told the US public: "This is what change looks like."

As the vote count crept past the 216 needed to ensure passage, Democrats clapped, cheered, hugged, high-fived, and called out Obama's "Yes, we can" 2008 campaign slogan.

All 178 Republicans and 34 conservative Democrats opposed the measure, spurred on by hundreds of protesters who chanted "Kill the bill" during a loud day-long vigil outside the Capitol.

With Vice President Joe Biden at his side, Obama acknowledged Republican warnings that Democrats would pay a steep political price in November raid-term elections that will decide control of the US Congress.

"I know this wasn't an easy vote for a lot of people. But it was the right vote," said Obama, who has vowed to help Democrats in swing districts win reelection.

The Senate was now to take up free-standing packages of changes, which the House approved 220-211, as early as Tuesday in a bid to complete its work on the overhaul.

Together, the Senate bill and changes would remake US health care a century after then-president Teddy Roosevelt rallied for a national approach, extending coverage to 95 percent of the under-65 population.

"The bill bans insurance company practices like denying care for preexisting conditions, imposing lifetime caps on coverage, while providing subsidies to help private insurance in newly-created marketplaces called 'exchanges.'"

It also raises some taxes on the wealthy while expanding a government-run program for needy Americans.

"This bill is complicated, but it's also very simple: Illness and infirmity are universal, and we are stronger against them together than we are alone," Democratic House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said before the vote.

"The trillion-dollar overhaul will take the America we know and love in the wrong direction," said Representative Eric Cantor, the number two House Republican, who noted 34 Democrats joined all 178 Republicans in voting "no."

Republicans also vowed to keep up the fight in the Senate—the new battleground—and repeal the broadly unpopular bill if they win back majorities in November.

After a year of often bitter debate, Obama cleared the way to his victory with an 11th-hour deal to sign an executive order reaffirming a long-standing US ban on government funding for abortions, winning support for the bill from a group of conservative Democratic holdouts.

"I've always supported health care reform," said the group's leader, Democratic representative Bart Stupak, flanked by other antiabortion lawmakers. "This bill is going to go through."

The Senate was expected this week to take up the changes and approve them swiftly, in order to take the process to publishers from using a parliamentary tactic, the filibuster, to indefinitely delay and threaten kill the measure.

Opinion polls have painted a confusing picture, with respondents expressing strong support for individual elements of the bill, but with large numbers saying they oppose the overall measure.

Democrats have highlighted the independent Congressional Budget Office's estimate that the bill would cost $940 billion over the next 10 years, while cutting $143 billion from the budget. US deficits through 2019 and $1.2 trillion over the following decade. AFP

PRESIDENT Barack Obama, with Vice President Joe Biden at his side, tells the nation, "This is what change looks like," after the final vote of the health care bill.

60 EARTH HOUR 2010

DOCUMENT EARTH HOUR WITH YOUR CAMERA AND GET A CHANCE TO WIN VALUABLE PRIZES!

On Saturday, March 27, 2010, from 8:30 to 9:30 in the evening, Filipinos everywhere will turn off their lights in a symbolic display of solidarity with the rest of the world. This is called Earth Hour. Its message is simple yet powerful: each of us can make a difference in the fight against climate change.

Last year, the Philippines ranked first among 56 nations in terms of local participation in Earth Hour 2009, by mobilizing over 10 million people in 647 towns and cities.

This year, organizers aim to mobilize 15 million people in 1,000 towns and cities across the archipelago. This means that there will likely be an Earth Hour event in a town or city near you! You can take part, first of all, by turning off your own lights.

You can also make your mark by documenting Earth Hour in your locality, using your mobile phone or digital camera. That way, you can help show the whole world how committed we Filipinos are to united action against climate change. What's more, you get the chance to win valuable prizes!

Here's how:

1. The contest is open to all Philippine-based individuals, aged 15 years and above.

2. To qualify, entrants must register via SMS through 4777. Their respective mobile numbers will serve to log any number of entries.

3. To register:
a. Send to 4777 (Smart & Globe users only) the following text message from your mobile phone:
GREEN(space)REG(space)firstname(space)lastname(space)address(space) EARTH
Example: green reg Mario C Santos Earth
b. Then, turn on your messaging facilities by sending a second text message to 4777 as follows: GREEN MEMO OK

4. There will be two categories: photo and video. Digital cameras and cellular phones may be used. All entries must be about an Earth Hour event (taken between 8:30pm and 9:30pm on March 27 or other related activity undertaken in line with Earth Hour and which captures the spirit of Earth Hour).

5. To submit multiple entries, one must label each one as follows:
a. For photo entries: (Mga ssssssss pic01, Mga ssssssss pic02, etc.
b. For video entries: (Mga ssssssss vid01, Mga ssssssss vid02, etc.

6. Photo entries for digital cameras must be submitted in 8R prints or in 4R prints for cellphone cameras. Send all entries with a copy in CD format, which includes the name/registered mobile number, address, email, category and signature of the entrant. Entrants need to submit a brief description of the event/activity captured or photocopies (no more than 30 words).

7. Video entries must be no shorter than one (1) minute and no longer than three (3) minutes each. They must be submitted as mpeg or avi files with low or recorded audio or music, in DVD format, then placed in a hard plastic DVD case. Name, registration number, address, email, mobile number, category and signature of the entrant must be written on both the DVD and its case.

8. Photo and video entries must be submitted by March 31, 2010 (or at least postmarked if sent through mail on the said date) to:
Earth Hour Secretariat
6/F PNOC Building II, Energy Center
Merritt Road, Ft. Bonifacio
Taguig City, Metro Manila

9. The top sixty (60) entries—30 digital photographs and 30 videos—will be included in the official Philippine audio-visual report to the global Earth Hour Secretariat and will be posted on www.earthhour.org. In addition, the most interesting entries that capture the spirit of Earth Hour will be gifted with cellphones, DVD players and official Earth Hour t-shirts as tokens of our appreciation.

10. Awardees will be notified by email and via SMS (text) from 4777. To claim their prizes, awardees should show the text message or email sent by the Secretariat confirming their awarded entry and bring one legal ID with photo (SSS, driver's license, passport or school ID). Provincial awardees will claim their prize at a designated area to be provided by the Secretariat.

11. All entries become the property of Earth Hour Philippines.

Switch off your lights.
March 27, Saturday
8:30pm - 9:30 pm

SWITCH

IN THIS ISSUE

■ MIC, Pagcor to put up Manila casino /B2
■ Napocor may stop selling power via WESM /B6

Editor Raul G. Marcelo ● Associate Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

INTEGRATED COMPUTER SYSTEMS, INC.

₱100B set aside for stimulus spending

Teves says economy still fragile as global crisis lingers

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET ASIDE AT LEAST P100 BILLION for stimulus spending this year as the economy remains "fragile" given the lingering effects of the global financial crisis, Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves said yesterday.

"This will be spent on infrastructure projects like communication facilities, airports and water facilities," Teves said.

He said the government was still counting funds to stimulate economic growth—following last year's P328-billion stimulus package—and that there was no decision yet on when the cap would be closed.

"We have to get a sense from other countries regarding their own exit strategies," the finance chief said, adding that hopefully the world economy was starting well into a phase of recovery.

Teves gave the opening remarks during yesterday's opening of the two-day Public-Private Partnership Days 2010 Forum of the Asian Development Bank headquarters in Mandaluyong City.

Co-hosted by the ADB and the World Bank, the yearly forums is for the first time being held outside Washington DC.

Citing an ADB study, Teves said the Philippines needed an estimated $87 billion over the next 15 years for infrastructure projects that would promote economic development.

Teves cited another estimate from the World Bank indicating that the Philippines would have to spend 5 percent of its total domestic output yearly on infrastructure investments.

"Unfortunately, the demand [for capital] exceeds supply while our fiscal situation is still fragile," he said.

"But a why we must find innovative ways as how to finance infrastructure projects, primarily through private-sector participation," he added.

Earlier this month, Malacañang announced that it was implementing this year the so-called Bohusig for Economic Acceleration Program (BEAP).

"Coupled with the accommodative monetary policy stance of the central bank to ensure adequate liquidity in the financial system and availability of credit, BEAP is expected to further stimulate growth this year," the Palace said.

In 2009, the domestic economy grew 0.9 percent. In 2010, the government is aiming at a growth rate of somewhere between 2.6 percent and 3.6 percent.

Court stops PCSO move on wireless lotto betting

By Doris C. Dumlao

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY solutions provider DPWH Inc. has obtained a court injunction restraining the state-owned Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office from awarding any new wireless lotto betting contract with other vendors.

PCSO will now have to go into arbitration proceedings with DPWH after the state entity cancelled the private firm's equipment lease agreement under which it was supposed to provide the wireless technology for nationwide lotto betting.

DPWH disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that pursuant to Civil Case No. Q-10-66814 entitled as "Application for Interim Measure of Protection in aid of Arbitration—Preliminary Injunction with Application for Temporary Order for Protection" that it filed before Branch 220 of the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City, an order dated March 19 was issued granting DPWH's petition.

Among others, the court granted the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction restraining the PCSO from implementing its betting through wireless technology with possible vendors such as Philippine Gaming Management Corp. and Pacific Online Systems Corp.

The injunction was issued by the court to prevent the PCSO [CONT'D] B2

"Svenson: The best solution for my hairloss!"
"I'm a very vain person – absolutely! When I had thinning hair, I asked, 'Why me? Of all people, why me?' Of course is no-no to unsightly wigs or transplants. I should do something to have a natural full head of hair again and look better. I went to Svenson! Their Non-Surgical Hair Integration – is the best! Now I have the thickest hair that I could ever ask for. It's perfect! Absolutely perfect, like I never had hairloss. I look better, feel better – everything's better. Palangga, why settle for less when you can have the best!"
Maurice Arcache, Columnist
No hair transplants. No toupees. Get a full head of hair back – guaranteed! Call now for a FREE private consultation.
Svenson
call 892-HAIR (4247)

91-day T-bill rate inches up to 3.9%

THE YIELD ON THE BENCHMARK 91-day treasury bills rose 2.7 basis points to 3.9 percent as buyers sought longer-term debt papers.

Meanwhile Treasurer Roberto B. Tan said investor preference was being influenced by expectations on inflation and interest rates, which he described as "most benign, at least for the moment."

Tan said the financial market continued to be very liquid, noting that all three issues in yesterday's auction were oversubscribed.

Investor rate on the 182-day bills rose down 3.3 basis points while the yield on the 364-day issue eased 4.2 basis points. The six-month debt paper now costs the government an average of 4.037 percent while the year-long issue costs 4.02 percent.

Investors tendered a total of P22.86 billion or more than twice the target offer of P8.5 billion.

Banks bid P1.54 billion or more, almost double the thereof of the Treasury's offer of P2 billion for the 91-day bills.

However, Treasury awarded only P1.72 billion of the bids with the lowest rate at 3.9 percent.

Also, investors tendered a total of P9.7 billion or more than twice the P5-billion offer for the 182-day bills.

The Treasury also received a total of P9.02 billion worth of bids or more than twice the P5.5 billion in 364-day bills on offer.

Yesterday's auction results broke the record of low past auctions where rates fell across the board amid oversubscribed offers.

The Bureau of the Treasury plans to issue P114.3 billion in debt papers in the first quarter, two-thirds of which will be in bonds.

For the same period, the government expects to spend P113.04 billion over its budget, accounting for more than a third of the target deficit limit of P295.2 billion for 2010.

In January alone, the government incurred a deficit of P27.1 billion, which was slightly lower than the P38.1 billion posted in the same month of 2009. Bernard W. Dominguez

Ides of March

MARKET RIDER

Dan Somera

THE "IDES OF MARCH"—A SOOTHSAYER'S warning to Julius Caesar from 1582's *Julius Caesar*—took on a whole new meaning since the play first came out hundreds of years ago.

It became a period of impending calamity instead of just another date in the Roman calendar, which eventually became the middle of the month or about March 15.

But what Shakespeare had in mind could describe for the whole the market is in today.

Market situation

As I've said about two weeks ago, I hardly expected will the popular idea to exist that the market was at the crossroads each of the trading spectrum.

However, I presume to look the contrary conclusion that the market would no longer have to coincide—one or head—over one of the crossfought territory. It was my impression then that had there been an increase in daily volume, and value of transaction that started to manifest were to persist, then the market would go back to the intermediate bullish trend in no time.

This assumption was overturned by the market's trading performance last week. Daily volume and value of transaction did not continue to grow. It happened just within the crucial P3-billion mark, closing the session on Friday only within the 3,000-3,100 or so level of the Philippine Stock Exchange index or PSEi. In this case, the market may turn take longer to closely define itself.

Also, the Holy Week is just around the corner. As we all know, trading activity during Holy Week is usually of no particular significance—volume and turnover value could be low to insufficient to reflect market psychosensitivity, more importantly most market movers would be on vacation.

Then comes the unbound structure, about four weeks after Easter.

Bad news live spin

Based on updated technical charts, last week's trading results showed that the market had been developing what could be called a head-and-shoulders pattern.

Head-and-shoulders pattern is the term used to describe a price chart formation in which a sharp price rises three times but declines after each peak. The first and third peaks are called shoulders. The second peak is called the head. In technical analysis, the "head-and-shoulders" is considered one of the most reliable trend reversal patterns.

The market is expected to define the right shoulder of the said pattern this week. If that happens, this may mean that the full impact of the head-and-shoulders pattern is all set to be unveil few days later, up to Holy Week.

On the downside, it could generate more selling. Its identified support level is 3,002. On the upside, there's no much resistance level except for the all-time-high level of 3,131.

In this case, the pessimist trading call is to take profits or "sell stocks that have broken out already from strong resistance levels that are to consolidate overbought territory."

But this would be counter-intuitive to conventional wisdom, I think, those. Should this situation arise, it would probably be better to concentrate on either staying off the negative impact or ride on the positive effect on which way the national elections would go. The national elections will certainly usher in a new price trend for the market.

On a technical note, the advice is to closely monitor the market's trading movement between the 3,002 and 3,100 index level. If prices should hold at said support level, with volume and value turnovers increasing and thereon, up to break out of the resisted 3,131 level, a trading buy is recommended.

Trying hard

I believe it was my friend, *who teaches finance at a girls' school in* Quezon City that sent me the following story. He's been trying hard to be funny. Let us allow him to measure up to our wait for better signals from the market.

Miller: Before I kill my victims, I usually ask their names. For (pointing to a woman), what is your name?

Woman: Isday, sir.

Miller: That's a nice name. It's me and Woman. No due. You'll spare your life.

Miller: You there (he pointed to a man). What is your name?

Answer: Ester ... but my friends call me Isday.

(You may reach the Market Rider at mailto:danielsomera@pse.com.ph or directly at mailto:somera@yahoo.com.)

MIC, Pagcor to put up Manila casino

By Doris C. Dumlao

INVESTMENT HOLDING FIRM MIC Investments Corp. (MIC) has entered into a partnership with the state-owned Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corp. to pursue a hotel and casino venture.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Monday, MIC said it had executed an agreement where Pagcor would establish, manage and operate a casino in a hotel to be constructed by MIC on its 1.9-hectare property at the San Lazaro Tourism and Business Park in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The site used to be part of the San Lazaro Hippodrome, a horse racetrack. It is now a special zone registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

"The contemplated complex stands the government's tourism program in the City of Manila," MIC said.

MIC, formerly Aztec Prime Resources Inc., was established in 1995 to engage in the mining business.

It eventually engaged in mining operations, and changed its corporate purpose from mining to that of an investment holding company in 1997.

The investment holding company is led by the same group that operates Manila Jockey Club Inc., the first horseracing club in Southeast Asia established in 1867.

It was acquired by a group led by businessman Alfonso Reyes Jr. in 2002.

Manila Jockey moved its horseracing facility from San Lazaro to Carmona in Cavite, and diversified into property development, starting with its 17-hectare property in San Lazaro, Manila.

Last year, it ventured into gaming operations with the establishment of a casino—the Pagcor Club Sta. Lazaro, located at the Turf Club, Sta. Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona.

Court stops PCSO move on wireless lotto betting

From page B1

(PCSO) on awarding any contract to anyone (MI) for wireless betting while DPSRI is pursuing arbitration proceedings in connection with the cancellation of its agreement (contract agreement) with the PCSO dated April 8, 2003. Under the agreement, DPSRI was to provide the wireless technology to enable the PCSO to receive lotto bets nationwide through wireless technology.

In issuing the order, the RTC said DPSRI had sufficiently shown that the unilateral cancellation of the IGA was without cause in the opinion of the PCSO board. Thus, approving the revised bid betting project, as well as PCSO's act of negotiating with third parties regarding the implementation of the project, compounded the violation of the rights of DPSRI, and that DPSRI would suffer grave and irreparable injury if the acts of PCSO were not enjoined.

"Hence, this court finds DPSRI's application for the issuance of a preliminary injunction by way of writ of preliminary injunction ... proper," said the order, which the court said was immediately executory.

DPSRI earlier obtained a 20-day temporary order of restraining order to prevent the PCSO from making any new moves on wireless lotto betting.

The injunction was filed by DPSRI amid reports that the PCSO was considering a proposal to implement a nationwide wireless lotto betting system with another company.

First Gen reported 15.8% increase in net income in 2009

By Amy R. Borres

THE LOPEZ-LED FIRST GEN CORP YESterday said its net income, attributable to parent, rose by 15.8 percent to P16.7 billion in 2009, despite posting lower revenue during the period.

In 2008, First Gen recorded a net income of P14.4 billion, the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange. According to First Gen, consolidated revenues in 2009 were lower at $3 billion compared to the previous year's $3.21 billion.

The company did not provide further details, except that First Gen's board of directors had already approved yesterday the company's audited consolidated financial statements for 2008 and 2009.

This year, First Gen wants to acquire the 750-megawatt (MW) Bacon-Manito geothermal facilities in Albay and Sorsogon, as well as the 246-MW Angat hydroelectric power plant in Bulacan.

First Gen had recently forged an alliance with the Ayala Group and First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPH) to form its Negros Island Consortium (NIC) that will bid for the 49-percent stake of the government in the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) in the Negros Island Power Plants.

The NIC will bid for the 192-MW Unified Negros Power Plants, which consist of the 49-MW Palinpinon geothermal plant in Negros Oriental and the 143-MW Tongonan geothermal plant in Leyte.

First Gen is a joint venture between the Lopez group's Energy Development Corp. (EDC) and Japan's Marubeni Corp.

Meralco declares cash dividends

MANILA ELECTRIC CO. (MERALCO) BOARD of directors had approved the declaration of a cash dividend equivalent to P3.35 per share.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Meralco said the dividends would be payable on May 11 to all common stockholders of record as of April 21. As of end-February this year, Meralco has 1,133 billion outstanding common shares, it said.

In the same meeting, Meralco also approved the list of candidates to the 11-seat board of directors for the election to be held during the company's stockholders meeting in May.

From the list of nominees, the San Miguel group is expected to hold four seats, while the Lopezes are sure to occupy two, with Manuel M. Lopez as Meralco chair and Eric Jose O. de Jesus as company president.

At present, Manuel V. Pangilinan's group controls 34.7 percent of Meralco through Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (10 percent) and infrastructure holding firm Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (14.7 percent).

San Miguel owns a 27-percent voting block in Meralco. Another group partnered to be allied with San Miguel, Global 5000 Investments Inc., owns at least another 7 percent of the power retailer. The Lopezes have kept to remaining 13.6 percent stake in the utility.

Meralco earlier reported that its consolidated core net income surged by 168 percent to P7 billion in 2009 from the previous year's P2.6 billion.

Amy R. Borres

Stocks end lower

From page B1

finishes point to the Holy Week and the long Lenten break next week.

There were 71 decliners, 28 gainers and 68 unchanged stocks.

The market was weighed down by selling on PLDT, shoots Equity Investors, First Holdings, Metrobank, SM Prime, First Gen and Ayala Corp.

On the other hand, Aboitiz Power, Energy Development Corp., SM Investments, BDO and JSFC Holdings bucked the downtrend, data C. Dumlao

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BUSINESS

Napocor may stop selling power via WESM

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) plans to relieve state-run National Power Corp. and 30-year lease assets and Liabilities Management Corp. of their obligations to supply power to the wholesale electricity spot market as default wholesale suppliers (DWS).

In a draft circular, the DOE said Napocor and PSALM, as the DWS, would no longer provide adequate electricity supply to WESM customers following the sale and privatization of 81.3 percent of the state-owned power plants and 63.75 percent of their independent power producer contracts.

A DWS refers to the entity that provides electricity supply to cover the demand of customers that are not direct participants of the WESM.

The DOE circular is bound to put some distribution utilities and electric cooperatives—which are non-WESM members and getting part of their requirements from Napocor—in a vulnerable situation as IPAPs power agreements will be terminated and non-WESM members will be cut off from the system 60 days after the circular takes effect.

The circular, however, directs all electric power industry participants to register in the WESM.

All distribution utilities and electric cooperatives in Luzon are currently mandated to get at least 10 percent of their electricity requirements from the WESM.

Francis Saturnino Juan, executive director of the Energy Regulatory Commission, admitted that without the DWS arrangement, "those DUs still have no other source of electricity, so they will have to be disconnected from the system."

"Cooperatives that really cannot register even if they want to because of some requirements, including the posting of bonds, will have to look for their own supplier and enter into a power supply contract with it," Juan said in an interview.

Juan said the DWS arrangement was in place when the WESM started operation in 2006 to ensure continuous supply of electricity to non-WESM-registered utilities.

Under the draft circular, all electric power industry participants with outstanding obligations with PSALM and Singsons will be required to settle their obligations or enter into a restructuring agreement before they will be allowed to register with the WESM.

Sugar 'export replacement' scheme to start

By Nica T. Olchondra

THE GOVERNMENT IS INSISTING THROUGH with its 'import replacement' scheme where 90,000 tons of sugar exported last year would be imported by concerned traders to boost local stocks.

This was according to Rosemarie G. Gromoso, head of the planning department of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) and vice chair of the Joint SRA-NFA (National Food Authority) Inviting and allocation committee.

Gromoso told reporters that sectors had interest to import and traders in the matter. Processed import volume allocations have been assigned to exporters or even if based on their export volumes last year.

International traders have a combined allocation of 85,500 tons and food processors, 4,500 tons.

Quintos said the government was reviewing the allocations for food processors and would invite them to import soon.

The 90,000 tons for export replacement form part of the 150,000 tons that the government wants imported before the milling season ends in August.

Import rights for 60,000 tons were auctioned off in February but there were very few takers. Auction participants awarded themselves of only 14,000 tons. The rest may be offered for bidding again later.

The Philippines needs a buffer stock of 360,000 tons by the end of August to ensure that sugar prices will not go up after the milling season.

Aside from beefing up buffer stocks, local traders are anticipating that the United States will increase its importation of sugar by at least to 75,000 tons under the tariff rate quota scheme that allows Philippine traders to ship sugar to that market duty free.

For the crop year ending Aug. 31, 2010, local sugar production is seen hitting 2.18 million tons.

LPG firm sets ₱500-M network expansion

PR GAZ HAUS, ONE OF THE MAJOR LIQUEfied petroleum gas suppliers in the country, has earmarked ₱500 million for the expansion of its retail network in the next five years.

The company will add another 500 "convenience stores" during the period.

"We are making strides in boosting our presence in the market," said PR Gaz chair and chief executive officer Nelson Pei.

For this year alone, Air Prog Pte. PR Gaz chief operating officer for franchising, said, the company was planning to put up 60 additional outlets, which would cost about ₱1.20 million.

PR Gaz has at present 100 stores and four LPG refilling plants, all of which are located in Luzon.

Pei said the company was looking at putting up half of its planned LPG convenience stores in Metro Manila, while the rest would be established in Bulacan, Tarlac, Batangas and Nueva Ecija.

About 70 percent of the proposed stores would be company owned, while the remaining 30 percent would be franchised, the outlet said. For company-owned stores, PR Gaz plans to obtain 70 percent of the investment requirement from banks, while the rest would be funded through equity infusion, he added.

PR Gaz also offers an individual franchising program worth ₱900,000 to ₱1.3 million for a 20-40-square-meter outlet.

Franchising fee covers the cost of providing business opening assistance, initial training, and franchise development services.

Franchise holders are expected to recover their investments in two to two-and-a-half years, Pei said.

Pei said the planned additional stations would help the company increase its market share.

"We foresee our market share and our capacity issues we should also increase our infrastructure," he added.

Last year, PR Gaz acquired a refilling plant in Pasig. Pei said the combined capacity of the company's four plants was only a fifth of the capacity of its Pasig plant.

He said the four refilling stations could refill 5,000 11-kilogram (kilo) or one. The maximum capacity of these stations, however, can be up to 32,000 cylinders a day.

Amy R. Remo

LIFESTYLE Wellness

'I can control my body' —Chef Carlo Miguel

How he lost 83 lbs in three months

By Anna A. Jamboro

BEFORE. 260 lbs., 2009

AFTER. 183 lbs., 2010 ALDEN TOLEDO

HE STARTED GAINING weight at age 7. By the time he got into his teens, he was overweight. When he hit his late teens, he was officially obese. And when he reached his 20s, he was morbidly obese.

At his heaviest, at 116 kg (260 lbs), he found himself complaining or having to do the simplest of errands: "Oh my God, I have to walk there?"

He had hypertension, high cholesterol and obstructive sleep apnea—mainly because of lugging around all that excess weight.

Today, with roughly 7.3 percent body fat, we kiss and a resting heart rate to match that of an athlete at 43 beats per minute, Carlo Miguel, second placer in the recently concluded "Biggest Loser Asia," looks like a teenager all over again.

"I've never been below 200 kg as a teenager. Now, at 83 kg, I can run around all day and not get tired. If I need to run off somewhere, I'm down...no problem," said the 33-year-old F.F. Miguel.

He was so determined to lose all the excess weight that before he left for the show he gave away all his clothes to the "Ukay" vendors—all five hobbyist bundle. He took with him his workout clothes, and clothes gifted to him that he never got to wear because they were too small.

"I knew I wasn't coming back the same person," he said.

Today, happy to be home, all pampered up and eager to impart his personal knowledge of weight loss to those who seek his help, Miguel said his head still needs to do a lot of catching up with his body.

He may look trim as everyone, but in his mind he still thinks he's the big, jolly chef. Miguel is the executive chef of Italo and Italo stores. He brags himself, for instance, before heading to to his chambers. On some evenings, he still walks around the bed to get to from the side because he will think he'll have a hard time crawling around toward where he would be comfortable.

"Sometimes I forget I can just go right about and jump into the bed," he said, laughing.

Everything just happened so fast. During the five months he spent in the "Biggest Loser Asia" house—less than two months in the south; more than two months home), he returned down from 132 kg (291 lbs) to 83 kg (182 lbs). Toward the end of the program he was exercising 12 hours a day, running 15-20 km per day. (They started walking at 10 km per day.)

Understatement

To say it's a huge accomplishment for someone who never even used to enjoy walking is an understatement. For Miguel, it's astonishing he never thought was possible. Now, he actually loves running.

"If you told me this an-dway last year, I would have laughed at you. I never believed I could do what I have done. It's been an amazing journey," he said.

So how did he do it?

Like all reality TV shows, the "Biggest Loser Asia" (subject to participants from the rest of the world, Miguel) had no contact with anyone outside the show, no access to sources of information such as the Internet, newspapers, radio and television. (The only time he was allowed in Skype was when his wife, his gut program—mainly because it made a great story for the show.)

Simply put, they had nothing/nowhere to do but focus on diet and exercise every single day. On their first week

> CONTINUED ON C4

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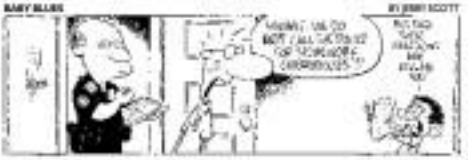


TULDOK

BEN

BIRD MACHINE

MARMAN'S LAGOON

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Home is the round to overhaul things at home and make changes for the better. In particular, those changes that will involve getting rid of what you don't need. Take the garbage out!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Discussions with others, particularly romantic and intimate, could get heated today. Your ideas and method is to persuade them to agree with you. Is this really necessary?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel very strongly about things, and express them today. This could prompt you have to work overtime, or you might be put in a position of influencing something. A gift for you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might run into emotional blocks when you're trying to get your point across today. Furthermore, this process may easily flare. Some negative energy today! (Snap.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your sense of mischief might be especially rife today because something behind the scenes is bothering you. Perhaps you're not being told about something, and you're curious about. This will spice very quickly.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Interest in romance and children, more than usual, is on your mind today. Whether you're single or married, you're about to be involved with these elements. (Just watch how the pieces fall.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Mixed signals with parents, bosses and authority figures today. You're generally cooperative, however, you're also very self-centered and demanding today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Misunderstandings about politics, religion and higher learning today. You're also self-centered and touch, stupid and today. It's for better. Or worse. Only time will tell. Think positive.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a good day to discuss inheritances, how to share something or how to approach a problem with tense and hostile. People are less vigor in their views.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Someone with a connection to close friendships and romance might annoy you today. You would be doing a favor, but it's about something. Try to relax.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Speak up about your views to immediate relatives or to those who share your work. You also might have ideas about how to improve your surroundings.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Participants in sports will be competitive today. Be cautious! Jealously partners will be jealous of one another. Be cautious! Don't give in to flare and feelings.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs go to www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

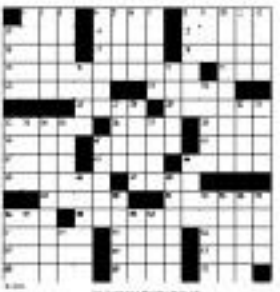
1	8	4	5	7	3	6	2	9
9	6	3	2	8	4	7	1	5
7	5	2	1	9	6	3	4	8
6	1	7	3	4	5	8	9	2
4	3	8	9	2	7	5	6	1
5	2	9	8	6	1	4	3	7
3	4	1	6	5	9	2	8	6
2	9	5	7	1	8	9	7	3
8	7	6	4	3	2	1	5	4

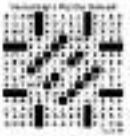
Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

			3		4			
		3	6		9	4		
		7		1		6		
4			1		5			2
5								1
3			8		6			9
		2		6		9		
		8	9		7	5		
			5		3			

Difficulty Level: ★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE





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Top eye clinic has new Makati address

Text and photos by Jake Ramirez
Contributor

"THERE IS NO NEED TO GO TO the US for one's eye care, our doctors and facilities can stand up to any eye facility," said Dr. Ash Ayoub Jr., the premier Lasik surgeon in Asia.

He was talking about the American Eye Center/EPES, the country's premier ophthalmic laser center for the treatment of vision-related conditions, which has opened its latest branch on 4/L, Greenbelt 5.

Most everybody must have heard of the wonders of Lasik surgery.

Lasik stands for Laser Assisted In-Situ Keratomileusis. Laser stands for Light Amplification by the Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Lasik is therefore Light Amplification by the Stimulated Emission of Radiation Assisted In-Situ Keratomileusis. (Whew!)

In the Philippines, American Eye Center/EPES has done 25,000 refractive surgeries since 1997. Its clientele includes international beauties Precious Hipolito and Melissa Ong. Elvis "Bato" Barros, singers Donna Padilla and Pops Fernandez, cosmetic surgeon Hedi Isaac, Sen. Joker Arroyo, and former President Fidel V. Ramos.

The American Eye Center has the longest-serving clinical experience in Southeast Asia since it opened its first stand-alone center in Shangri-La Plaza in 1993.

It was founded in 1987 by a group called the Associated Eye Specialist, composed of physicians Benjamin Cabrera, Cesar Espino, Victor Cagurangan and Ayoub.

Cabrera is the president of Philippine Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery, while Espino is the president of the Cornea Club of the Philippines.

Cagurangan is the chairman of Medical Corp's ophthalmology department.

The American Eye Center provides complete eye services, including cataract and Lasik surgeries. It offers the latest diagnostics and therapeutic services for people with eye problems such as cataract, refractive surgery, glaucoma, retina and retinoscopy, uveitis and pediatric ophthalmology, oculoplastic, conjunctival diseases, oculoplastics, low vision orbit.

The American Eye Center is actually a dream team of eye doctors, with their senior partners leading 14 other eye specialists.

Dr. Carmela Dagooko is other managers of the Eye Center. She is also chief of the Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation Section of the Makati Medical Center's Department of Ophthalmology.

Other than the two existing branches, there are screening centers conveniently located at Medical City, Capitol Medical Center, Manila Doctors Hospital and Cardinal Santos Medical Center.

Visit www.eyecenter.com.ph or e-mail info@eyecenter.com.ph

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Former president Fidel Ramos, Efren 'Bata' Reyes, Zsazsa Padilla, Sen. Joker Arroyo have been clients

Lemon grass helps prevent cancer, fungal infection and mosquito bite

By Amy Cervantes
Correspondent

JUDGE NOT THE LIMPE. marketable-body classification given to stringed, citronellic-called Cymbopogon citratus. A few years back, I was given its bulbous roots to plant in a sandy pot under a sunny spot. Daily I carried water in, impatience in his the short bristles shrink given and watch a decent length so I could cut them up and make the most refreshing of herbal tea ever. Never happened! Daily, behind my busy back, something was chewing on the shoots.

I never did find out if the culprit was my neighbor's dog or my own cats. These two animals have been verified to visit our articles and blogs to love lemon grass. The plant has forgiven all and a lemony taste that apparently drive them crazy.

Voluntarily, I pulled out the chewed off shoots and rooting bulb, giving enthusiasts to the hotly heated grass, since I know it must find a chance of growing in my apartment area where dogs and cats abound. I resorted to keeping fresh neighbor stalks at the grocery. I wasn't lucky enough to have a yard where lemon grass could grow profusely as it normally does, and instead, in many occasions it is considered a weed that must be uprooted and burned. Yet this weed is a favored culinary spice in Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand and Vietnam. If you've tasted Tom Yum Goong, it's lemon grass that makes this soup deliciously unforgettable.

Anti-yeast

I became a fan of lemon grass due to its known antifungal property. Until decided to go into lemongrass diet, and part of it involved killing the yeast, or simple fungi, in my system. I resolved to stop getting vaginal yeast infections, as they would also affect my urinary tract. Other signs that one has too much yeast in the body are: excessive allergies fungal diseases such as athlete's foot, ringworm, or dandruff. Since I love to eat bread and mushrooms, which are basically yeast and edible fungi, I definitely had yeast overload.

Aside from weight, there are other upsets and boils that antibody kill yeast, especially candida albicans. the particular yeast I wanted out of my system. There are bad, enormous, garlic, ginger, oregano, ichardo, thyme and turmeric.

However, I chose to use lemon grass for my battle against yeast. It was an easily accessible remedy that was likewise convenient to make and ingest in an infusion, and it tasted yummy, as well. One just had to get hold of two lemon grass stalks, wash them well, and slice them diagonally about half an inch to an inch long, enough to bang on a tablespoon. Then put them inside a non-metallic container such as a ceramic coffee mug, and pour two cups of freshly boiled water and let it steep for 15 to 30 minutes. One can add honey to sweeten, but I take mine as it is. For best dose, you just need to drink the amount of dried fungal: add the same amount of water and, when it's steeped, put in your container then cool it with ice cubes.

Anti-mosquito

Because of a scheduled trip to Bahamas, I found another use of lemon grass. I was wary of catching malaria, even if the travel agent assured me that I would be up north, for Cuba, and malaria was prevalent elsewhere, and only in wild areas. I would be staying in a developed place. Still, I wanted to take precautions, short of getting vaccinated. I found a locally made mosquito-repellent spray with a natural lemon grass base. The plant's aromatic constituent, citral, is often used for perfumes. It consists of citronella, another natural mosquito-repellent, also is also found in lemon peel, and other plants with lemony aromas and tastes.

Anti-cancer

Citral shows promise as a cancer-cure. Israeli researchers discovered in lab tests that it causes cancer cells to kill themselves, without harming the healthy cells. The amount of citral they used in research, one gram, is the same concentration normally found in a cup of lemon grass tea. However, scientific studies on actual human remains to be done. The 2005 study by the Israelis was published in Planta Medica, a journal on alternative remedies. They used cancer cells found in the blood, such as leukemia.

There has already been one cancer found on lemon grass' anti-cancer properties, as cited by the Philippines own herbalist, author Barit Bantoto Bisaliaga (surgeon Dan contributor, who was taking classes posted to April 2009 that she consulted about citral with her oncologist, who responded, "Since citral can reduce glutathione levels, making tumor cells less viable taking carboplatin could cause an increase in side effects from the carboplatin." However, citral seems not to have an adverse effect for chemo medicines such as gemcitabine, which do not need glutathione for their metabolism.

It's best to consult medical professionals before you resort to using lemon grass tea for cancer treatment but for any other health reasons. For example, in my case, since I tend to have an allergic reaction to plants, I only use lemon grass, as well as other plant-based remedies, sparingly. Because of the heating sensation in lemon grass, I don't overdo it orally.

E-mail the author at cookscribe@gmail.com or text 0928-203-0758.

Resort offers detox program for summer

THE SHIRE, A WORLD-CLASS resort by holistic healing and wellness, is offering a medically supervised weight-loss program through its Detoxification Center.

This unique healthy holiday experience features a range of holistic therapies for cleansing the body, improving nutrition, jump-starting sustainable weight loss, and restoring youthful complexion through a combination of medically guided juice fast, colon hydrotherapy sessions, spa treatments, nutritional support, sustainable lifestyle discussions and participation in daily activities such as yoga, Pilates, power walking, and more. A minimum four-night/five-day stay is recommended, however; longer programs are also available for up to seven weeks. The special "Summer Slim" Jetsetter Detox Retreat starts at P97,000 net per person on double occupancy and runs until May 31.

Selected as one of CNN Traveller's "Six of the Best Environmentally Friendly Hotels" and FEDO "One of the Top 10 Sugarcane Restaurants in Asia," this award-winning resort is also the recipient of Asia-Spa Excellent Awards for Spa Cuisine of the Year, Medi-Spa of the Year, and Spa Retreat of the Year.

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THE H&M bracers initiate therapies for cleansing the body, improving nutrition and jump-starting sustainable weight loss.

Drinking carrot, apple, sugar beet juices help make skin radiant

MANY PEOPLE REMEMBER RESOLUTIONS: they may "discontinuedness" on, do within individuals—the success dropout, discussion, anxiety-driven diseases abound. Supposing it based on the person's inability to retain harmony of body, mind and spirit. Notice the erosion of wellness. If you find yourself feeling low energy, chronic stress, it's time to do something about it now. You could adopt the following:

1. Change the way you look at things. A therapist could put your problems in perspective.

2. Seek spiritual guidance. Have a chat with your pastor or priest.

3. Make an appointment with yourself. This is a must for busy people. Set aside some time to be with yourself—your thoughts, hopes and dreams.

4. Quiet your mind by steadily lying your life. One of the simplest ways to achieve this is to do one practical exercise at home—clean up your closet. When you rejuvenate old and unperfected and outmoded things, a psychologist often takes place. Better yet, give your excess belongings to charity. It works wonders for your sense of well-being.

5. Try the mind-body (then spa).

Qigong power

Everyone has heard about Qi, the vital energy or life force ("chi" in Japanese, "prana" in Indian). The ancient practice is the exchange of energy between people and various subtle through breathing and movement exercise relaxation and good health. Sen, a 30-year-old entrepreneur, has first depression for three years. While medication and counseling helped, she was in need of a more compelling change in her life. She found Master Li Jun Feng and Shung Gben Qigong. This teacher who is considered one of the top masters of Qigong is true principal teacher of a special form of Chinese yoga. A former member of the elite chinese soul and soul healing remedies issues, he has perfected a technique to nourish the body, calm the mind and uplift the spirit.

The system is a series of moving and non-moving meditation with the primary purpose of enabling practitioners to return to the natural state of balance and experience bliss. Three days later, Ai Sen took conditioned her since translated her illness. Public demand has brought back Master Li through the workshop "Awakening of the Soul, Unconditional Love Qigong." It will be held March 27-28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at Ateneo University. Call 0920-908 1194/0920-9302905; visit www.chengibod.org.

INSIDE OUT
Gay Cantina

Beauty regimen

Here's a sure-fire way to bring radiance to skin.

1. Drink carrot-apple and sugar beet juice daily for five days.

2. Cut back on all forms of sweets—especially at night.

3. Sweat it out daily through any form of exercise.

4. Sleep by 10:30 p.m. nightly.

5. Drink one sachet of Hyaluron & Collagen from Japan before bedtime. It takes five to 14 days, one will have healthy skin. It contains Hyaluronic Acid, Beta-Glucan, peptides, Vitamin C and soy lecithin—a super combination that uniquely lifts the face and reduces wrinkles. Call Ma'rd of Bellanee at 721-2078, Villadi, 332-3864, SM Bicutan.

Today's affirmation: "I give more brightly everyday."

Love and light!

E-mail the author: coygan@gmail.com

Is knowledge the way to salvation?

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC Church is now at a monolithic crossroads that has withstood the onslaughts and vicissitudes of history for over 2,000 years. Its authority and influence extend throughout the furthest reaches of Planet Earth. And the Pope's pronouncements in matters of faith and morals are considered infallible and therefore must be obeyed without question by all Catholics.

But this was not so at the beginning of its existence. Before The Orthodox Christian Church was historically established by the Pagan Roman Emperor Constantine, Christians were divided among so many sects all claiming to be followers of Christ. According to one source, there were so many as 60 to 90 gospels in circulation at the time, each of which had its own adherents or following. All these gospels claimed to be based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

To settle the confusion and to establish only one official set of beliefs to be followed by all Christians, Emperor Constantine called a council of bishops in Nicea in the year 325 A.D. During that council and in subsequent meetings, the Church officials adopted only four gospels as authentic, namely those of Luke, Mark, Matthew and John. The rest were rejected as being of doubtful authenticity, if not outright heretical.

Most of those rejected writings were burned or destroyed. But fortunately, some of their followers copied the original, hid the books in the various caves in Egypt, away from the prying eyes of the Orthodox priests.

One of the most influential Christian sects at the time were the "Gnostics," who did not agree with the establishment of a hierarchical structure of deacons, priests and bishops who declared themselves to be the only source of confession and that "outside the Church there is no salvation."

"The Gnostics," according to Marvin Meyer, co-editor of the Gnostic Bible, "were religious seekers who proclaimed gnosis (knowledge) as the way of salvation. To know oneself truly allowed Gnostic men and women to know God directly, without any need for the mediation of rabbis, priests, bishops, sacraments or other religious officials."

Church authorities were not pleased with such freedom and independence. They mentioned the Gnostics as heretical and a threat to the well-being and good order of organized religion. Heresy hunters, led by Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, France, criticized loudly and forcefully "against what they mentioned was the falsehood of the Gnostics".

Gnostics did not experience a single or universal set of beliefs, unlike Christ established by the Orthodox Christian Church. In fact, there were various beliefs, some even contradicting one another. But there was a common thread in practically all Gnostic groups. They emphasized that the highest truths could be found only within themselves. Gnostics were not multiplicity of beliefs.

"Gnostics sought knowledge and wisdom from many different sources," explained Meyer, "and they accepted insight wherever it could be found ... they embraced a pre-modern, intuitive, highly unstructured, variously and often as the manifestation of divine insight."

By many estimates, no knowledge nothing of the teachings of the Gnostics except through their Christian critics who regarded them as heretics. Incomplete texts of the Gnostics' writings were discovered in a cave in Nag Hammadi Upper Egypt by a peasant goats' herder looking for soft soil used as fertilizer.

In one of those gospels found in Nag Hammadi, The Apocalypse of Peter, as recounted by St. Thomas Papels in her highly readable book "The Gnostic Gospels", The main Christ explains to Peter that those who name themselves bishops and also deacons, as if they had received their authority from God, serve merely 'nameless ranks.' Although they do not understand mystery, they boast that the mystery of truth belongs to them alone.

A central doctrine of the Catholic Church is that a man who was dead for three days came back to life. That's incredible! And what can never be proven or verified in the present, according to the Christian historian, Tertullian, "must be believed because it is absurd."

Note: A new one-day seminar on "Occult and Esoteric Aspects of Quarter Crystals" will be held March 27, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. in Sunny Montenegro in Ave. Mill, Pinag Plaza I Grnd., Legaspi St., Granada, Makati. Call 8367265, mobile 8159898, e-mail jaimelicauco@yahoo.com.

'I can control my body'

SIZZLING autographs after the "Biggest Loser data" finale

They worked out four hours a day—two hours in the morning, three long bouts in between, then another two hours in the afternoon. This gradually progressed to six hours per day, then eight, then 10, before reaching the final 12-hour workout regime per day.

"I wouldn't recommend to anyone doing what we did. It's unrealistic to live your life working out, six, six hours a day. There's a big difference about getting yourself healthy and losing weight for a competition. What we did is extremely exhilarating compared to what one would normally do," he said.

More professional

As a chef, Miguel doesn't trust anyone these days to prepare the food he eats. An additional teaspoon of oil could easily add up to 75-80 calories, he said. So, for prepare his own meals. He has also developed a way of working around the kitchen. He knew the food he prepares and eats it out to avoid consuming unnecessary calories.

Eating for work and eating for his consumption needs to be defined, he said. "I just had to become more professional rather than eat any way I want for the whole day."

Miguel used to be able to go through an entire day without actually having to sit through a meal, although this meant he would be constantly picking on the rich food around him. Today, he eats five times a day—healthier, low-fat food with lots of greens and no carbohydrates.

"If I needed some fat in my diet, I could eat the skin off a chicken, but I would never deep-fry my chicken," he said.

He continues, though, that people may not see any dramatic changes in the looks and body fitness menu, he uses people's idea of a celebrity-trainer is still rich food. He hopes, however, to someday study nutrition and come up with meal plans for people wanting to lose, gain or maintain weight.

"There are a lot of reasons, emotionally and mentally, why people are fat," he said. "Right now I really want to help them. If I can do it, anybody else can."

MONG KONG, January 2007. 330 lbs.

Greatest thing

He also plans to take up courses to become a certified ABM (spinning) and Body Pump class instructor in Fitness First, where he has been a member since 2007. He assumed down from 300 lbs to 291 in two years, he said, but had a hard time getting the number to go down even further because he couldn't manage his busy work schedule.)

"The greatest thing I have learned from this experience is, I can control my body. I can control what weight I'm going to be, how I'm going to shape it, how much muscle and fat I want. I am in control now. That's the greatest thing I have achieved," Miguel said.

From entering his day at 11 a.m., Miguel is now bursting with energy at 7:30 a.m., his hypertension, high cholesterol and obstructive sleep apnea long gone.

He stayed away from building muscles during competition because it would make him weigh more, but now he wants to muscle up. Next step, he said, is to be a trainer to his future daughter. Then he and his wife could work together to plan their first nutrition, which would eventually lead them to pursuing an franchise.

And at Fitness First, he will be seeing more of his trainer as a client, instead.

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Edited by Evonne G. Velarde

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Dixie Chicks set to tour with The Eagles

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE—All three members of the Dixie Chicks, including lead singer Natalie Maines, are heading out to Asia on a nine-month stadium tour with The Eagles and Rich & Urban. The studio the first time in four years that the Chicks will tour together.

Their first show with The Eagles kicks off in Toronto on June 8. AP

Bayang Barrios' 'Biyaya' bound to become a folk classic

By Pocholo Concepcion

Bayang Barrios
"Biyaya"
Pro-Indibong Mayaon ni Bayang Barrios

Better late than never. This was released in 2008, but does everyone know about it?

It's actually the fourth solo album of the former female vocalist of Joey Ayala et ang Bagong Lumad. In "Biyaya," Bayang Barrios brims with the blessings of the local country scene: a spare use of perseverance and undiminished passion for her art. She gets ample support and theme songwriting credits with several people, including husband Mike Villegas who also plays acoustic guitar throughout with a spare lineup of welcome friends.

The album's acoustic sound pulsates with a lively, at times gentle, brew—a perfect match to Barrios' inspired singing. She's very engaging, whether coaxing kids to seize the day in "Lakas, Tapang, Bisaya" or hellishing her own child in "Mama," pretending she lonely to leave for "Pamamalakad" or vowing to give environmental comfort to her mother in "Paghilom Ka Inay."

The ballads are nonetheless interesting—the most wonderful of all is called "Nayagngalahol," which nominates about love and contentment without even using "pag-ibig" in any of the stanzas. The only regretful thing is the absence of a lyrical translation of the Visayan songs. Otherwise this is contemporary Pinoy folk that's bound to become a classic.

Yeng Jy
"Ready or Not"
Polyfloat Records

The son of former RAM soldier Red Rapsares reportedly told his father that he'd rather hold a microphone than a gun. Yeng JY is into rap and in his debut CD he proves that he has energies to prove that he can map his own route to hip hop recognition. Most of the tracks have an indigenous dance groove; JY is fortunate to have good producers who lay in excellently programmed beats. "That Girl" and "I Bet They Don't Do It Like That" are two fine examples.

JY's vocal from smooth paced as well, although his lyrical assaults in social commentary are hampered by naivete. He's no Gloc-9 and he knows that. But even if he says he wants to be part of a movement that would lift the country's spirits through dance-oriented hip hop, JY might as well get busy too, with the hard, complicated facts of life.

Here's hoping that, in due time, he could express from what he wanted in tracks like "Kapampangan" and "Upod Stupp."

Jay R
"Jay R Sings OPM Love Classics"
Universal Records

Born in the United States, Jay R has been dreaming of recording an all-OPM album. Here he gets his wish and the result is quite impressive. The US-trunk, all-covers CD starts off on a good note with Rivermaya's "Himala," which Jay R interprets with a throaty pace, but filled with grace and elegance.

The singer is gifted with a voice suited for classy, urban R&B and he practically bounces through most of the ballads. His duet with Nina in Gary Valenciano's "Mali" should make Sipay Aldaoar green with envy.

But it's the love-lost notes, "Pasasalamat Ka" and "Wala Na Bang Iba?" that shine best under Jay R's command. That's the mark of a fine R&B/soul crooner—how good he can give life out of sad songs.

It's time for all the great Pinoy composers to write new stuff with Jay R in mind.

(OBY Albert)

Joey Albert
"Songs of the Heart"
Viva Records

Now based in Canada, the always delightful as ever Filipino pop singer named Joey Albert took off to Manila and recorded an all-OPM record CD—some songs of which she said she had never heard of.

That would be Rivermaya's "You'll Be Safe Here," Concha's "Step" and Sonata Bercia's "Rainbow."

Joey's rendition of the first two are a bit disconcerting, especially for fans of the aforementioned bands.

But she acquits herself well in the rest of the tracks, sounding in good in the original voices in, for instance, Sale Ali "Forevermore," Imuh Bonifer's "Kahit Kailan," and The Campbell's "Month No Strong Mindset."

Joey Albert should do an all-originals album soon.

REVIEW

6 local artists in overall charts

THE TOP-SELLING ALBUMS IN THE Philippines for the week March 8-14, based on Odyssey Music & Video store chain's nationwide sales reports:

Overall

1) "Kaw Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 2) "I Star 15: Best Of TV & Movie Themes," Various Artists, Star Records; 3) "Feature. (Platinum Edition)," Taylor Swift, BMG Music; 4) "2010 Grammy Nominees," Various Artists, PolyEast Records; 5) "The Love Inside," Trai Fitch, Viva Records; 6) "Resolutions Of The Soul," Sina, Warner Music; 7) "Only One," Side A, MCA Music; 8) "Brand New Boys," Paramore, Warner Music; 9) "Revelation," Journey, MCA Music; 10) "Romance Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan," Ukrainian Beatles, Universal Records

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GLORIAN Magno

'Idol' girls favored to win

WHEN THE 20 FINALISTS OF "AMERICAN Idol's" current season were announced, we noted that, unlike last year, when male contestants like Lee Allen and Adam Lambert tried for the title at all's end, this year's female finalists are more exceptional singers than their male counterparts.

Thus, we can dare to predict that a female Idol will probably emerge as the "American Idol" champion this season.

Discussing here are the 10 female finalists of this year's 12 female finalists—Siobhan Magnus, Crystal Bowersox and Paige Miles.

We know that they're older than contestants Kelly Shirtess, but they're simply too vocally and temperamentally outstanding to be ignored by the idol's generally youthful viewer-voters.

Another interesting development is the fact that Siobhan and Crystal are "alternative" singers with a predisposition to rock performance, a field generally reserved in the past for male contestants like Lambert and Chris Daughtry.

Well, this year, it's the girls who are rocking us, and viewers are excited, because their in-your-face vocal performances are truly talented, atmospheric and compelling.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Siobhan (or, Shiv-awn) is the first of the contestants to be eliminated from the competition all wrapped up. We expect Siobhan to end up as her biggest threat, because Siobhan is in the US this year what Adam Lambert was in 2009—the limited with the widest vocal range and highest notes. Indeed, a couple of weeks ago, Siobhan went all-out with a really high note that had the US's viewers and judges in addled awe.

While we favor some of the female hero this year, their male counterparts aren't a bad season. Some of them could ce'll pull off an upset. Like 24-year-old Scott Savol, better Casey James and Cleveland's (by credit) 16-year-old baron Kelly.

Gavin is similar to looking and singing styles to last year's popular finalist, Danny Gokey. He's a particularly interesting bet to become, for a moment there, are reminded the contestant that he was Filipino-American. Since no Asian singer has survived the US's winnowing-down process, we hoped that he would be "it."

However, after we asked around, we got the real lowdown. The bad news is that he can't sing. The good news? He's married to a Filipina. Well, that's something.

Even if he weren't so "well-connected" in this way, however, we'd still be rooting for Andrew, because he's a truly outstanding singer. Will he end up joining the US's top four? Abangan.

Wider vocal range

This doesn't mean that she has the competition all wrapped up. We expect Siobhan to end up as her biggest threat, because Siobhan is in the US this year what Adam Lambert was in 2009—the limited with the widest vocal range and highest notes. Indeed, a couple of weeks ago, Siobhan went all-out with a really high note that had the US's viewers and judges in addled awe.

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6 local artists ...

Francoise Or

OPM

1) "How We Say," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 2) "I Kiss U: Best Of TV & Movie Themes," Various Artists, Star Records; 3) "The Love Parade," Tone Feels, Viva Records; 4) "Soundtrack Of The Soul," Nina, Pioneer Music; 5) "Only One," Side A, MCA Music; 6) "Romance Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 7) "Shake," Yael Lelangan, Universal Records; 8) "Somebody To Love," Vice Ganda, Polyeast Records; 9) "Addicted To Acoustic 2," Princess, Viva Music; 10) "OPM Love Classics," Jay R, Universal Records

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4 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
5 GREEN ZONE
6 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
7 HURT LOCKER

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4 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
5 HURT LOCKER
6 REMEMBER ME
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8 GREEN ZONE

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5 BOOK OF ELI
6 WHEN IN ROME

IMUS

1 REMEMBER ME
2 WHEN IN ROME
3 BOOK OF ELI
4 ALICE IN WONDERLAND

ANGELES

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 BOOK OF ELI
3 WHEN IN ROME
4 REMEMBER ME

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1 WHEN IN ROME
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3 DEAR JOHN

DUMAGUETE

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 DEAR JOHN
3 THE BLIND SIDE

BACOLOD

1 WHITE
2 DEAR JOHN
3 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
4 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
5 PREDATOR
6 WHEN IN ROME

ILOILO

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
3 IT'S COMPLICATED
4 WHEN IN ROME
5 EDGE OF DARKNESS
6 INFESTATION

GENSAN

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
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APO's farewell gigs

THE APO HIKING SOCIETY performs in a series of farewell concerts, "Thanks APO," on May 14 (Davao), 15 (Tagaytay), 21 (Cagayan de Oro), 27, 28 and 29 (Metro Manila, Greenhills), with guest band Peryodiko. Call 4346181 or 4265581.

'Acoustic Sessions'

"Acoustic Sessions" features Aiza Seguerra, Juris and Princess on April 16 at The Hideout, 500 North Edsa, Quezon City. Call 9115555.

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IN MORE THAN 100 CINEMAS
1 RICH KID.
SPOILED. REBELLIOUS. ANGRY.
IT WILL TAKE AN ORDINARY GIRL
TO LOVE HIM AND CHANGE HIM FOR THE BETTER.
"...a 5-HANKY WEEPY!"
ROBERT PATTINSON
EMILIE DE RAVIN
Remember Me

OPENS MARCH 24
THEY'RE HAPPY AND GAY
LAUGH OUT LOUD!
LAUGH 'TILL YOU DROP
JIM CARREY
EWAN McGREGOR
I LOVE YOU PHILLIP MORRIS

Why Katrina Halili's road manager quit

KATRINA HALILI'S FORMER ROAD MANager, Gemar Enriquez, had to cut ties with her abruptly.

"Kathlina asked me to act a meeting with TVS because she wanted to resign," says Gemar. "Magkasama kami kumarap sa big bosses. Kasi ayaw niya ako sa kanila when she suddenly landed sa ABS-CBN, kasi nag-resume ng ang ng contract sa GMA7. I realized we're two masters so I chose TVS over her."

During the turbulent six-month episode in Kat's life, Gemar never left her side. Hopefully, Dimas and Kat will also secure their friendship "resurrect," which is why we have proven that network deals that are always subject to change until further notice.

* * *

Jose Millet had a secret date at his place but my source (who was in Gani's house that night) made me promise not to reveal her name.

All I'm to say that the girl is connected to show biz but she's no longer that visible. Anne Curtis is not merry because it was just a spur of the moment thing. The girl and her friends were hanging out at Gani's. She stayed behind for a karaoke sighing. How harmless is harmless?

* * *

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

It's still a guessing game on who the stars in "Survivor Philippines Celebrity Edition" will be. Based that even active celebs are being tapped to be the castaways.

The question is, will they be willing to sacrifice their charmed lives for 39 days? Island fished to the nut, who will be the chosen one?

* * *

GMA Films and Viva Films are teaming this "Walking Gods" will live up to the tradition of its 20-year-old, critically acclaimed predecessor.

The sequel to the 1984 Inkmart thrilled classic arc only includes four of the lead actresses in the original film: Sheila Isabel Lopez, Aina Paloche, Carmel Marbin and Rio Locsin; it also stars Gabby's Gabriel Valdez, Buffy Enriquez, Eugene Domingo, Isa Calzado, Jenny Ira Mercado and Cristine Reyes. It is directed by award-winning filmmaker Joel Lamangan.

Now, I'm telling the stories of the new characters whose lives happen to intertwine with those from the original batch," Derek Joey says. "It's still a comedy, which, to some people, is a genre of lightweight caliber. But make no mistake about it, Hindi psychopath yung pelikulang yon at nagpi-ring ng political issues."

How is it different from the original version? "The role of women in cinema has changed dramatically in 15 years. Now we have powerful women in media as illustrated here, as well heads of major companies," explains Derek Joey. "But the bonus, the social commentary on the role of women in society keeps up with the revolution that Bernal started way ahead of his time."

* * *

Catch the benefit concert "Changing Lives: Tribute to the Black Widow 13" show with special guests Justin Timberlake and Jaja on March 27 at the Mall of Asia open air grounds. All net proceeds will be donated to the PLDT Smart Foundation. Call 8919999 or visit www.tinker world.com.ph.

E-mail mckeithgalesheart@yahoo.com

'Great Glee Sing Off' contest open to Filipinos

AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PROMOTING "Glee" last September, STC and Jack TV invite Filipino fans of the show to sing like their favorite characters in "The Great Glee Sing Off" contest.

The competition is open to schools in Mega Manila. No experience necessary but here are the requirements:

+Form a singing group of eight to 12 members aged 13-21.

+Upload a video of your group singing "Don't Stop Believing" from the "Glee" soundtrack, together with a letter of intent, to www.stc.com.ph or www.jackbox.com.ph.

+The top 20 entries will join the "Socialcia" where they will need to sing another song from the "Glee" soundtrack in front of

THE CAST of "Glee"

representatives from Solar Entertainment.

The top 10 will then move up to the "Regionals" where they must perform a mash-up in front of a live audience and a panel of judges composed of Joshua Zamora (The Manoeuvres), Michael Williams (Theater Down South Company), a member of The Company X and a Solar Entertainment representative.

The top five will move on to the "National" finals.

The winners will be crowned STC and Jack TV's "Great Glee Sing Off" champions.

"Glee" airs Wednesdays, 8 p.m. on Jack TV and Thursdays, 10 p.m. on STC. For more contest details log on to www.jackbox.com.ph or www.stc.com.ph.

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IGGY Pop, godfather of punk

The Stooges get their due at last

DETROIT—IGGY POP THE GODFATHER OF punk rock, was ecstatic his groundbreaking band The Stooges wouldn't ever taste a spot in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

As it turns out, Iggy and the boys finally are getting their due at the induction ceremony set their eighth attempt.

Pop believed The Stooges would never get into the Rock Hall "right up until the day before somebody called me."

"I kept telling the guys over and over: 'We're not gonna get in, guys.' Yeah, I was absolutely sure of that," Pop said in an interview.

Three possibilities

It's hard to say exactly what turned the tide in voter sentiment, but Pop points to three possibilities: the band's long streak of Rock Hall-calling the January 2009 death of founding member Ron Asheton and ... blackmail.

The Stooges honored their fellow Michigan native by performing rocking versions of two of her hits—"Burning Up" and "Ray of Light"—on the night of the 2008 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremonies.

Pop says the gig helped generate some much-needed exposure for a band that wasn't on the radar for 30 years due to numerous breakups and lineup changes that current members blame on drugs and fights over money.

Whatever the reasons, the guys will be on stage at New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel to celebrate their own names.

They inducted "I Wanna Be Your Dog" and "Search and Destroy," says songs Stooges guitarist James Williamson says are "the most representative" of the band's catch.

The latest was on the 1973 album "Raw Power," which, in 2003, the UK on Rolling Stone's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time. The magazine called it a "proto-punk rock classic."

AP

10 YEARS AGO
14 PEOPLE WENT MISSING WITHOUT EXPLANATION...
THEY HAVE RETURNED
OPENS MARCH 24
FRIGHT NIGHTS
DON'T SLEEP ALONE TONIGHT